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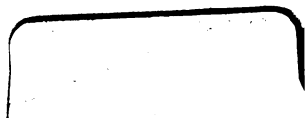
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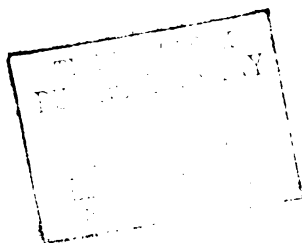
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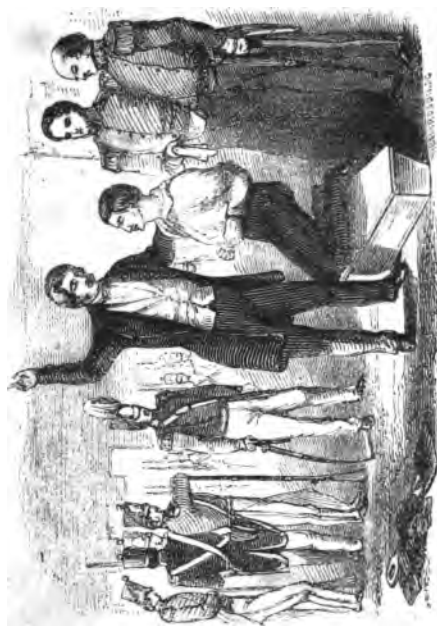


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THE DE LETER SHOT—SEE PAGE 58.

THE
MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER,

And other Narratives.

BY REV. J. T. BARR,

AUTHOR OF "RECOLLECTIONS OF A MINISTER," "MEMORIALS OF
MERCY," ETC.

New-York:

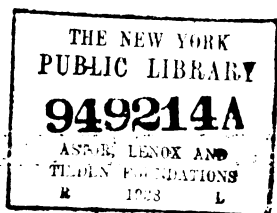
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Preface.

THE Divine Teacher of righteousness, during his temporary abode on earth, "went about doing good," — instructing the ignorant, comforting the broken-hearted, and directing the sincere inquirer after salvation into the path of life. The *young* were more especially the objects of his care. For the welfare of the lambs of his flock he appeared to feel the deepest solicitude. Even after his resurrection from the dead, he said to one of his apostles, "Feed my lambs."

There are indeed many considerations which render the observance of this last injunction

of the risen Saviour, imperative on Christian ministers in all succeeding ages, and which urge them, both from the pulpit and through the powerful medium of the press, to advance the spiritual interests of the young; their tender age, their inexperience of Satan's devices, and the numerous and seductive temptations to which they are constantly exposed,—these are arguments which plead irresistibly on behalf of youth.

In the following “sketches,” I have endeavored to attract the youthful mind to the study of divine truth, by exhibiting in a series of narratives, the awful consequences of pursuing a course of iniquity, and the happy effects arising from the acquisition of true religion; by portraying the deformity of vice, and displaying the beauty of early piety.

Some of these incidents are certainly very extraordinary, and deeply exciting. But the mysterious events of real life, have frequently been known to surpass the imaginary narrations of romantic fiction. With respect to the present volume, I beg the reader distinctly to understand, that it is not a narration of imaginary events, but a faithful record of authenticated facts. The sketches introduced were originally written for the "CHRISTIAN MISCELLANY," and have already appeared in that interesting and widely-circulated periodical. That they have been favored, by the blessing of God, with extensive usefulness, is evident from the numerous communications which I have received from various parts of the kingdom, and which I desire to acknowledge with devout thankfulness. Their appearance in this separate form, is owing to

the importunity of many friends, whose judgment I respect, and whose motive I duly appreciate.

I have only to add, that having given these narratives a thorough revisal, I am encouraged to indulge the hope, that a re-issue of them in their present improved form, will render them more generally acceptable. And my earnest prayer is, that a still larger amount of good may be derived from their perusal by the youthful portion of the community, for whose instruction they were more especially written.

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The Merchant's Daughter.

"Sweet as zephyr's balmy breath,
Soft stealing 'mong the roses newly blown,
The spirit fled—she closed her eyes in death,
And, smiling, enter'd on the world above."

THE hour of midnight was fast approaching. The merchant and his wife had not yet retired to rest. A cloud hung over the brow of each, as they pensively sat before a cheerful fire. Their silence had been long and uninterrupted; for their thoughts were upon their only child, their daughter Margaret, who had, on several occasions, attended a Protestant place of worship, in opposition to their wishes, and who had signified her determination never more to hear mass.

"Little did I think," said the merchant, who was the first to break the silence, and whose voice as he spoke was tremulous with emotion, "after all the pains we have taken,

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and the money we have expended, to educate her in the principles of the only true religion, that the thoughtless girl would so soon become a *heretic*. The thought of it breaks my heart."

"Holy Virgin! Guardian Mother! protect us!" exclaimed his partner, drawing from her pocket a string of beads. "And is it come to this? Shall it ever be said that I am the mother of a heretic? May I be safely landed in the paradise of saints before that day arrives!"

"But how can we prevent it? Have I not talked to her till my whole store of arguments is exhausted? Have I not, even with tears, warned her of the rocks and shoals of Protestantism, against which so many have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience? But all my advice is lost upon her. She no more regards it than the whistling of the wind."

"Perhaps a week's solitary confinement to her chamber may bring her to her senses."

"I doubt it. She has a Protestant Bible

in her room, and dares to read it without the sanction of the priest; and sets up a mode of interpretation agreeable to her own fancies, in opposition to the authority of the Church. She has also several heretical books; and a confinement to her apartment would only afford her increasing opportunities of reading them. I have one more expedient; and if that fail, I shall consider it a lost case. It is this: to send for father ——, the priest, to converse with her; and I have very little doubt that, by his great learning, and extensive knowledge of the doctrines of our holy Church, he will easily disarm her of all her Protestant weapons."

"That is a wise suggestion. I will send for him to-morrow morning. And mark me, husband, if the girl be obstinate, if she will not be persuaded by the invincible arguments of the priest, another night she shall not rest under this roof. It would be a shame for us, who were cradled in the only true faith, to harbor a heretic in our house, though she be our own child. Do you agree to it?"

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“With all my heart.”

It will be necessary to inform the reader, that the merchant and his wife were natives of the south of Ireland, where they resided for many years in undisturbed tranquillity, and enjoyed a considerable share of worldly prosperity. As they had but one child, they doated upon her with the tenderest affection, and spared no expense in giving her an education suited to her rank. Being also devotedly attached to the Romish Church, within the pale of which their forefathers had lived and died, they intrusted the care of her religious training to the sisters of a neighboring convent.

About the period of the great rebellion, when that unhappy country was distracted by internal feuds and commotions, they embarked for England, and took up their abode in the town of Liverpool.

At this time, Margaret had grown to woman's estate. She had already seen nineteen summers ; and possessed a form of unrivaled beauty, which, with the superior qualities of

her mind, and the sweetness of her disposition, rendered her society both attractive and agreeable.

During the first few weeks of her residence in Liverpool, the natural buoyancy of her spirits appeared to forsake her; for, as yet, she had no companions, no familiar friend, in whose society she could pass the genial hours of returning spring, or taste the sweets of social intercourse. The eye of her imagination would often linger on her fatherland; and a sigh would often escape her gentle bosom, while calling to remembrance the associates of her childhood. This mental depression, however, gradually wore away, when she, at length, found herself noticed and caressed by several respectable, intelligent ladies, who resided in the neighborhood. But they were Protestants, and regularly attended a dissenting chapel. As her acquaintance with these pious females continued, the merchant's daughter felt a strong desire to know something of the Reformed religion. She had been taught, from her earliest infancy,

to regard all who were not in the bosom of her own Church as unfit for the kingdom of heaven,—nay, as brands for everlasting burnings! But her early prejudices were materially weakened by the consistent conduct and uniform piety of her new companions; hence she justly concluded, that there must be something valuable in a religion which can produce such exemplary holiness of life and practice. She listened with astonishment, mingled with pleasurable emotions, to their religious experience, including an account of their conversion to God, their enjoyment of the divine favor, and their assurance of eternal life through the merits of a crucified Saviour. A spirit of inquiry was awakened in her mind; and, with a view to receive fresh light on these vitally important truths, she procured a copy of the Holy Scriptures, which the priests of her own Church had interdicted.* While secretly and prayer-

* In the Rhenish Testament, published in Ireland, a few years since, is the following note on Hebrews v, 5:—"The translation of the English Protestant Bible should be abhorred to the depths of hell."

fully perusing its sacred pages, she obtained clearer apprehensions of the method of a sinner's reconciliation to God ; and consequently felt more than ever convinced that the faith in which she had been nurtured was not the faith of the gospel. Her eyes became gradually opened to the abominations of Popery ; and she saw how utterly untenable were the principles she had so implicitly imbibed. The doctrines of transubstantiation and purgatory ; the sale of indulgences and pardons ; the practice of invoking saints, and offering prayers to images ; the sacrifice of the mass ; with all the ridiculous rites connected with the Romish worship, appeared to her better informed judgment, as the essential characteristics of the *Man of sin*. As she had now become increasingly concerned for the salvation of her soul, she one Sunday morning resolved, for the first time in her life, to accompany her friends to the dissenting chapel, trusting that the service might prove beneficial to her spiritual interests. She went, and was not disappointed. The absence of that

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pompous display, and those unmeaning ceremonies, to which she had been accustomed from her childhood, enabled her to collect her scattered thoughts, and to direct her mind to the one thing needful. She listened to the sermon with breathless attention; the word was accompanied with power; and before the close of the service she was made happy in God.

It was impossible that this change in her views and character could be long concealed from her parents. They had seen her reading the interdicted book; and had been informed of her attending a Protestant chapel. At first, they mildly remonstrated; but finding that she was firmly attached to the doctrines of the Reformed Church, and that she was determined never more to worship in the sanctuary of her fathers, their anger was unbounded. She was threatened with the anathemas of the priest, exclusion from heaven, and all the curses and imprecations which the *holy* Church of Rome denounces against heretics. All these threatenings fell on her ear without produc-

ing the least change in her sentiments ; and the misguided parents became pale with vexation when she informed them, that the fulminations of their corrupt Church would fall upon her as harmless as the playful lightning at the close of a summer's day.

Such was the state of affairs which led to the conversation which I have related at the commencement of this chapter. The next morning, father —— arrived, and after a long interview with the merchant's daughter, which, at the instigation of the former, took place in an adjoining room, the discomfited priest returned to the parlor, where sat the unhappy parents, anxiously waiting to know the success of his ghostly advice.

"O," said he, "I can make nothing of her. She abjures our holy faith ; and (*Jesu-Maria!*) speaks of our venerable Church as blasphemous and cruel ! I fear she has become an irreclaimable heretic."

The fate of Margaret was now decided. She was ordered forthwith to prepare for her departure, for no other offense than consci-

entiously rejecting doctrines and ceremonies which she believed to be irreconcilable with Scripture; and for associating herself with a Church, within the pale of which she had already obtained the greatest of all blessings—the salvation of her soul. Within the space of an hour after this unnatural mandate, she was ejected from her home.

It was not any natural aversion to their only child, that induced the merchant and his wife to resolve on this cruel expedient; for they had always loved her with the greatest affection. But being attached to a Church which teaches its deluded members to regard all who dare to oppose its idolatrous and superstitious institutions as worthy of death, the mistaken parents imagined they were rendering an essential service to the cause of truth, and exhibiting to the world an example of exalted piety, by ceasing to foster a heretic,—though that heretic was *their own child!* But such is the spirit of Popery. It not only corrupts the judgment, by causing it to embrace the most palpable falsehoods and glar-

ing absurdities, but obviously tends to deaden the finest feelings, and to extinguish in the bosom the tenderest sympathies of our nature.

The expulsion of Margaret from her paternal home was accompanied by a promise, on the part of her father, that whenever she felt inclined to return to the only true Church, his heart, as well as his arms, would be ready to receive her. Her afflicted heart was too full to reply ; and she at once directed her steps to the residence of one of her female friends, a respectable young lady, who lived with her mother in an adjoining street, hoping that her counsel, in her present emergency, might prove beneficial. The sympathies of this pious female were immediately awakened on hearing the account of her persecutions ; and she mingled her tears with those of the interesting sufferer. The only points now at issue appeared to be, to fix on the place of her future residence, and to decide on the most effective means of securing, in an honest and creditable calling, the necessities and conveniences of life.

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"You shall reside with me," said her generous friend: "my mother will watch over you with maternal solicitude, and I will be to you as a sister."

Tears of gratitude filled the eyes of the merchant's daughter at this unexpected proposal; but, for obvious reasons, she declined the liberal offer. "I would rather leave Liverpool altogether," she replied; "for by remaining here, I shall be the subject of further annoyances, and it is more than probable that your generosity to me would expose you to some degree of obloquy. Besides, I have fully resolved to labor for my own support. My education will not be without its advantages, in realizing the object I have in view. I purpose, as soon as practicable, to undertake the charge of a few pupils. I flatter myself that I am competent to the task. And I have no doubt, that my gracious Saviour, for whose sake I have been driven to this alternative, will smile upon my endeavors. 'When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.'"

“ If such be your intention, it may be in my power to assist you. I have an elder sister, who keeps a respectable boarding-school, in a beautiful village, not far from Manchester. She is a widow, though scarcely twenty-five years of age. When I heard from her lately, she stated that she was greatly in want of a young lady, competent to teach the senior boarders. I am sure, with your superior attainments, you will be quite an acquisition to her establishment. You will find a happy home under her roof. She will love you with the affection of a sister.”

This appeared to Margaret such a timely and providential opening, that she did not hesitate for a moment to avail herself of it; and the next day found her engaged in the duties of her new vocation. Here everything smiled upon her. The docility of the youthful pupils committed to her charge, rendered the task of tuition peculiarly pleasing; and while in the society of the young and accomplished widow, she seemed almost to forget that she was an outcast from her father's

house. The conversation also of that excellent woman inspired her with increased attachment to the Protestant religion, and gave a deeper and more decided tone to her personal piety. Together they worshiped in the house of God, and together mingled their devotions at the domestic altar.

Twelve months had now rolled away since the amiable Margaret had been banished from her home. And though during that period it may be truly said, the "lines had fallen to her in pleasant places,"—though her domestic enjoyments had far exceeded her highest expectations,—there were seasons when the recollections of past occurrences would cast a shadow over the horizon of her earthly joys. She had twice written to her father without receiving an answer; and once to her mother, with no better success. "Alas!" she would sometimes exclaim, "I have no longer a place in their affections. They have banished me from their presence, and blotted me from their remembrance. Surely the religion of the Bible does not sanction such parental cruelty,

for that is a religion of love. But it is the religion of *Rome*, a cruel, persecuting, soul-destroying religion, which has blinded the judgment of my parents; and by its blasting influence has extinguished every spark of affection for their only child. But while I live, I will not cease to pray that the veil may be removed from their minds, and that they may yet experience the truth as it is in Jesus."

There was a favorite spot, within about ten minutes' walk of the house, to which she had been attracted by the beauty of the surrounding scenery. To this retired spot she would often resort in the pleasant evenings of summer, for the purpose of meditation. But those solitary rambles tended rather to increase her melancholy than assuage it—to fan the flame that was secretly consuming her delicate constitution, rather than to extinguish it. This was becoming every day more apparent, by the sickly paleness which had overspread her beautiful countenance, and by the faded lustre of her eye. Gradually

her physical strength began to decline, and her wasted frame to sink under the power of disease. She was compelled at length to be confined to her bed ; and notwithstanding the most eminent medical men were consulted, and every effort which human aid could administer was adopted, with a view to restore her to health, she continued to fail. During this short illness, her mind was divinely supported. The hope of the gospel which had sustained her in the season of persecution, was still the anchor of her soul in the prospect of death ; and she several times sang, with a voice of almost supernatural strength,

“ Thrice blessed, bliss-inspiring hope,
It lifts my fainting spirit up.”

The pious widow, who had loved her as a sister, was now unremitting in her attention to her dying charge. By night and by day, with but few intervals of rest, she was seated by her bed-side, or employed in administering to her wants. These proofs of genuine affection were fully appreciated by her afflicted

friend; and the tears of gratitude often filled her eyes.

One morning, after a severe fit of coughing, she appeared unusually thoughtful. "Can I do anything for you, my dear?" said the sympathizing widow, who had been silently watching her.

"I was just thinking of my parents," she replied. "Though they have not answered my former letters, yet I cannot but think, that if they were acquainted with my present situation, they would not refuse to visit their dying daughter."

"I will write to your father immediately; and may this communication be more successful."

A letter was accordingly addressed to the merchant, urging him to repair, without delay, to the death-bed of his daughter.

The next day, and the next arrived; but still he came not. "I fear," said the dying saint, "he will not come; and I must die without the privilege of again beholding the authors of my being. I cannot long survive.

I feel the hand of death is already upon me ; but my soul is happy in God, and I am looking for eternal life, through the infinite merits of my adorable Redeemer. When I am gone, should you see my parents, tell them that their outcast daughter has found an asylum in the paradise of God ; and that her last breath was spent in fervent prayer for them."

These were her last words. In a few minutes her eyes became fixed, her heart ceased to beat, and her spirit entered into rest.

One beautiful evening, when the autumnal sun was lingering in the western horizon, and the summits of the distant mountains were radiant with the glory of his departing beams, the lonely widow was seated near the window of her apartment, watching the declining orb, till it was no longer visible to her eye. Yet still she sat, attracted by the beauty of the prospect, and pensively gazed on the extensive landscape which was richly variegated with a thousand pleasing objects, and which,

in seasons now forever fled, she had contemplated with sentiments of enthusiastic admiration. Through the fading twilight, she caught a glimpse of the old gray tower of the village church, which was visible through a partial opening of the lofty trees. A tear involuntarily started into her eye, while this object was before her; for it was in the grave-yard of that church that the husband of her youth had found an early resting-place, and in the same spot the remains of her late affectionate friend, the merchant's daughter, had on *this day* been committed to the dust. While these mournful thoughts were passing in her mind, a carriage drove up to the door, and a venerable-looking stranger alighted. Having ordered the carriage to the nearest inn, the stranger knocked at the door, and soon after being admitted into the parlor, requested to see the mistress of the house. On her entrance, he appeared to be much excited, and in a hurried tone inquired whether Miss —— could be seen.

"Allow me first to ask," said the widow, "whether you are her father."

"I am," he quickly replied.

"Then your daughter has to-day been carried to her grave."

"O Heaven! I was afraid of this. My angel child! Would I could have seen thee once more, but for one moment, to ask thy forgiveness! But I was not permitted; and it is now too late. I am justly punished for my cruelty in expelling from my house a daughter, who had a natural claim to my protection. O merciful God, have mercy upon a poor wretched sinner!"

All this was uttered in strains of the deepest anguish; which proved that the merchant was laboring under a violent paroxysm of remorse, as he paced the room to and fro. At length a flood of tears came to his relief; and taking his seat, he buried his face in his hands.

"Endeavor to be calm," said the sympathizing widow, "and I will relate to you something about your daughter's death, which I am sure will encourage you." The merchant

listened with intense interest, while she faithfully recounted to him the happy state of her mind, her dying prayer for her parents, and her triumphant departure to a better world.

When the ebullition of feeling, which this affecting relation had produced upon the mind of the merchant, had partially subsided, he adverted to the fact of having received letters from his daughter ; but as they contained no expression which led him to conclude that any change had taken place in her sentiments respecting the religion in which she had been brought up, and having solemnly pledged himself never to receive her till she was willing to return to the Church of Rome, he and his wife had determined to take no notice of the letters. He also stated that about a month since, he was compelled to visit Ireland, for the purpose of transacting some business, relating to a little property which he possessed in the sister kingdom. His wife accompanied him. When his business was settled, and they were preparing to return to Liverpool, his wife was attacked

by a fearful epidemic, which was at that time prevailing in the neighborhood. In a few days after the attack, she fell a prey to its ravages, and was buried in the land of her fathers.

“On the evening previous to my embarking for England,” continued the merchant, “while I was overwhelmed with grief in thus losing the partner of my bosom, I stepped into a place of worship in Belfast, not knowing in my excited state of mind that it was a Protestant chapel. The sermon had already commenced; but I heard sufficient to convince me that the religion of the Reformation was the true religion. I never before heard the method of a sinner’s acceptance with God so clearly and so forcibly pointed out. There was no mention of priestly confession, or of penance as essential to salvation, but a simple reliance on the atonement of Christ. I did not wonder, therefore, that my daughter embraced it with such avidity. At the close of the service I sought an interview with the pious minister; for I was deeply distressed

about my soul. By his edifying conversation, and faithful exposition of Scripture passages, my mind received such a flood of light, that I only wondered I had so long walked in darkness and error. I therefore resolved immediately on my return home, to seek my out-cast daughter, and clasp her in my arms. On entering my house, in Liverpool, I found a letter from you, stating that she was in dying circumstances, and wished to see me without delay. I looked at the date of the letter, and found that it had been written more than a week. Without waiting to sit down, I ordered my carriage, impelled by a secret hope that she might be spared till I arrived at your house. But God has otherwise ordered it. I am now *alone* in the world. I have neither wife nor child."

Little now remains to be added. He begged to be directed to the spot where the remains of his beloved Margaret had been interred. The grave was pointed out to him by one of the domestics; and he was left alone to indulge his melancholy reflections. It was a lovely

night. The heavens were thickly studded with stars. The moon, which rose in cloudless beauty, flung her brightest beams over the gothic tower; while the windows of the venerable church glittered with the silvery lights. A double row of elms, disturbed by the sighing of the autumnal breezes, had sprinkled their leaves thickly across the church-yard path; and the stately yew, which had stood for nearly a century, cast its dark shadow over the "mouldering heaps" which covered the ashes of the dead of former generations. The merchant heeded not the beauty of the night. His thoughts were with his buried child. Exhausted by the violence of his emotions, he threw himself on the grave. Loud were the sobs which burst from his bleeding bosom, bitter were the tears which moistened his pallid cheeks, and long did he remain prostrate on the damp ground; till, at length, rising to depart, "his body was wet with the dew of heaven."

On his return home, he felt ill, seriously ill. Medical aid was promptly procured, and

he was ordered to keep his bed. The painful bereavements he had sustained, the intense mental excitement he had suffered, and his long exposure to the cold night air, while at the grave of his daughter,—had rapidly brought on a malignant fever, from which he never recovered; and after lingering for about six weeks, he closed his eyes upon the world forever.

"Praise ye the Lord, ye saints below,
From whom your peace and pardon flow;
Begin on earth that joyful song,
Which soon in heaven you shall prolong.

"Yes; in the morning of our days,
O Lord, we would attempt thy praise;
Begin at once, and never cease,
To bless thy name, and grow in grace.

"To Him who sits upon the throne,
To Him who did for sin atone,
With saints and angels we would raise
Our songs of never-ending praise."

The Fatal Career of a Backslider.

"Alas, for the bright promise of our youth!
How soon the golden chords of hope are broken!
How soon we find that dreams we trusted most,
Are very shadows."

ONE of the most popular local preachers in the — circuit, was Robert —. He was about twenty-one years of age when his name first appeared on the plan. At that time he was humble, pious, and zealously devoted to the cause of God. He was a young man of some promise, though his education had been much neglected, in consequence of being compelled, very early in life, to labor as a mechanic. He now filled a responsible situation in a mercantile house, and was much respected by his employers. His literary attainments were superficial; for his general reading was of that desultory character, which rather amuses the mind than improves the intellec-

tual faculties. But notwithstanding these disadvantages, he was not destitute of talent. He possessed some redeeming qualities which rendered his public discourses attractive to the generality of his hearers. His language was chaste, and sometimes even eloquent; and as he was naturally voluble of speech, he experienced no embarrassment in giving expression to his thoughts. His voice, though not very powerful, was melodious in its tones. In addition to which, his appearance in the pulpit was graceful and prepossessing; and in his manner he was earnest and impassioned.

Had he continued humble as he was promising, discreet as he was zealous, his labors might have been extensively useful; and, doubtless, many, converted through his instrumentality, and edified by his pious example, might have been the "crowns of his rejoicing" at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he loved the voice of flattery; and soon became "puffed up" by the vain encomiums which were injudiciously heaped upon him. In attending his evening appointments,

he frequently found multitudes, especially of young persons, who had walked several miles to hear him. To one who already entertained the most exalted views of his own abilities, this was highly gratifying. And when he had been engaged in the work for about the space of twelve months, he found himself raised to an elevation of popularity which should have excited in a pious breast sentiments of devout thankfulness; but which in his case only tended to flatter his self-complacency and pride.

What a vain creature is man! The very blessings which a gracious Providence sometimes lavishes upon him, instead of being acknowledged with fervent gratitude, and producing a corresponding sensibility of his utter dependence on the merciful Donor, are too often employed as instruments of rebellion against God. Thousands have been known to endure reproach and persecution with invincible courage, and even to bless the hand under which they have suffered; but seldom have we met with instances in which pride has not

been fostered, and moral principle has not been relaxed, by the adulations and plaudits of an admiring multitude.

The preaching of Robert was not of a character to secure permanent attraction. His genius was too discursive. Declamation was substituted for appeals to the understanding; and rhetorical flashes supplied the place of sound argument. Hence his sermons, which were generally lengthy, often betrayed a barrenness of that evangelical simplicity, which cannot fail, when accompanied with an unction from above, to affect the coldest heart. He aimed more at display than at edification; more to please the ear than to benefit the soul. And his intolerant spirit, which was becoming every day more impatient of control, disgusted many of his hearers. It was also evident that the vanity of his mind had produced a laxity in his moral deportment. An unbecoming levity in his general behaviour, both in the pulpit and in the family circle, was too apparent. So that the ministers and leading men of the circuit had occa-

sion to remonstrate with him on the impropriety of his conduct, by pointing out the dangerous precipice on which he stood, and the fearful consequences of indulging a spirit so contrary to that of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Happy for Robert had he profited by their advice! Happy if their instructions had induced him to retrace his steps, and to make a fresh surrender of himself to God! But his proud spirit could ill brook the reproofs of men whom he ostentatiously regarded as inferior to himself in talent. Finding that his popularity had declined, and that most of his quondam admirers had deserted him, he gave up his plan, and dissolved his connection with the society.

Thus his descent from the giddy eminence to which the embryo of promise had raised him, was accelerated by his own imprudence; and in that fearful descent were extinguished his early hopes.

From this period the life of Robert presents a series of crimes and atrocities, of troubles

and privations, the contemplation of which cannot but affect the reader with mingled feelings of pity and abhorrence. May they also awaken in his bosom a determination, by the assistance of divine grace, to abstain from those hateful vices which paved the path of the youthful backslider with unnumbered sorrows, and which facilitated his progress to an untimely grave!

St. Paul says, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." Never was this apostolical injunction more scrupulously observed than in the case of Robert. Every effort was made to reclaim him, every expedient adopted to induce the wanderer to return to his Father's house. But neither prayers, nor entreaties, nor even tears, prevailed. He was resolved to "walk in the ways of his heart, and in the light of his eyes," reckless of a future judgment.

Liberated from the ties which bound him to a religious community, and influenced by the counsel and example of the worthless

characters with whom he began to associate, he threw off all restraint, and embarked in a career of sinful pleasure, which, in a short time, embarrassed his circumstances, and undermined his constitution. At length, owing to his dissolute habits, his employers, who had been uniformly kind and liberal towards him, discharged him from their service. Being thus destitute of the means of support, he left his native town; and with scarcely sufficient covering to screen him from the wintry blasts, literally begged his way to the nearest sea-port on the southern coast. Here he succeeded in obtaining a situation; but his idle habits again gaining the ascendancy over him, he was dismissed at the end of one month. He applied to several other persons, and from each obtained temporary employment; but still pursuing his intemperate course, the door of each was successively closed against him.

Wandering as a vagrant, he now depended for support on the casualties of the day. Scantily were his wants supplied; and on

many a bitter night, cold and hungry, having no lodging, and no means of procuring one, he would wander along the beach, or lay himself down at the foot of some beetling cliff, exposed to the fury of the winter sky, and essay to slumber, amidst the roar of the angry billows.

Unsupported by the principles of religion, and bowed down by an accumulated weight of sorrows, he felt himself unable to contend with the difficulties which were thickening around him. Life became a burden; and he more than once contemplated putting a period to his existence. But his knowledge of the theory of religion gave him too much reason to apprehend that such a dreadful expedient, instead of terminating his sufferings, would only plunge him into deeper and irretrievable misery.

In one of his peregrinations through the town, he met with a poor fisherman, to whom he disclosed his destitute condition. "You seem deplorably poor, young man," said the fisherman: "have you any objection to sell

oysters for me? I will remunerate you according to the number that you dispose of."

"I have no objection," replied Robert; anything rather than starve."

An agreement was then entered into; and the fisherman furnished him with a basket containing a small quantity of his ware, promising a fresh supply when needed. He then directed him to the different public-houses in the neighborhood, where he would be likely to secure customers; and Robert, with a heavy heart, at once entered on his new employment.

Such was the menial office to which the unhappy young man was compelled to submit, in order to procure the necessaries of life. Such was the humiliating vocation of one who was formerly a welcome guest at the tables of the rich, who was flattered and caressed by a large circle of admirers, and who might now have moved in a sphere of respectability and honor, had not his rebellious spirit hurried him to degradation and ruin.

Second Part.

"The muffled drum is rolling, and the low
Notes of the death-march float upon the wind;
And stately steps are pacing round that square
With slow and measured tread: but every brow
Is darken'd with emotion; and stern eyes,
That look'd unshrinking on the face of death,
When met in battle, are now moist with tears.
The silent ring is form'd, and in the midst
Stands the deserter."

FOR the first time since his lamentable fall, Robert began now bitterly to bewail his apostasy from God. He had indeed long been awakened to a sense of his sins, by the miseries which they had entailed upon him. But those convictions were unaccompanied by repentance. No contrition of soul was felt; no tears of penitence bedewed his pallid cheeks; no desire to return to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul had been breathed from his heart. *Now*, his agony of mind arose more from a review of his sinful practices, than from the contemplation of his sufferings; and on several occasions, while strolling along

the solitary beach, gazing upon the vast expanse of waters, or listening to the loud roar of the breakers, he would sigh for the return of those hallowed joys which once possessed his bosom. On those occasions, had he met with some pious Christian to take him by the hand, some devoted messenger of the cross, to whom he could with confidence reveal what was passing in his mind, his convictions might have been deepened, his desires for salvation strengthened, and the helpless wanderer might have again been directed to the Saviour of sinners. But the low calling which he was now compelled to pursue, was little calculated to further the progress of reformation. Most of his visits were confined to public-houses, to the tap-rooms of which his customers chiefly resorted. Thus mingling with the society of the intemperate, his convictions were often lost amidst the roar of the drunkard's song.

One evening on entering one of these places, he found a party of soldiers, who had come to the town for the purpose of beating up for re-

recruits. It was at the time when war was ravaging most of the countries of Europe. The sergeant of the company fixed his eyes upon Robert, and invited him to drink. He could not withstand the temptation; and, seating himself by the side of the soldier, endeavored to drown his melancholy reflections in the inebriating cup. In the delirium of intoxication he found a temporary relief. The wily sergeant, taking advantage of his helpless situation, descanted, in his broad Scotch accent, on the advantages of a military life, and the flattering prospects of promotion which the army opened to the view of a steady and obedient soldier. The consequence was, Robert was induced by the arguments of the sergeant to enlist; thus binding himself to a profession which he had previously held in the greatest abhorrence.

In a few weeks the party, with their young recruits, were ordered to join the regiment, which was quartered in a distant part of the country. In proceeding to the place of their destination, they had to pass through Robert's

native town. It was evening when they approached its suburbs. The sun had already sunk below the horizon, leaving a purple glow on the summits of the distant hills. Through the gray twilight which succeeded his departure, Robert gazed pensively on the well-known scenery; and while his thoughtless companions were indulging in laughter and merriment, his thoughts were so intently occupied by the recollections of the past, that the tears involuntarily started into his eyes, and he turned aside to weep. The following beautiful lines of Gray came to his remembrance, and with deep emotion he repeated them to himself:—

“ Ah, happy hills ! ah, pleasing shade !
Ah, fields ! beloved in vain ;
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,
A stranger yet to pain.”

“ What is the matter with you, comrade ?” said one of the party, who had noticed his dejected countenance. “ Cheer up ! who knows but in twelve months you will be promoted to the rank of an officer ?”

This unexpected sally put an end to his meditations ; and he endeavored, though with a desperate effort, to regain his wonted buoyancy. But in marching through the town, and recognizing many of his former associates, his heart seemed to die within him, and in spite of many an inward struggle to suppress the agonizing emotions which a consideration of his present situation had awakened in his bosom, he felt himself unequal to the task : his lips became compressed ; his eyes closed ; his head fell back ; and, overcome by the agitation of his feelings, he sunk fainting on the ground. In this state he was conveyed to the nearest inn, where he soon recovered.

“ What a fool I was, sergeant,” said Robert, “ to give way to such childish feelings ! But it is all over now.”

“ And what were ye thinkin’ o’, young man ?” inquired the sergeant ; “ was ’t about some bonnie lassie, whom ye hae left behin’ ? Or perhaps ye been thinkin’ o’ yere absent mither, and felt unco’ sorry ’cause ye did na tak her advice. But when she hears that ye

hae become a great man in the army, she will be filled wi' mickle joy. Cheer up, chiel! cheer up! An' I can tell ye for yere encouragement, most of the men in our regiment are wild scapegraces, downright blackguards; so that an honest laddie, like yersel', is sure of preferment. That is the reason why I hae been promoted to the rank o' a sergeant! D'ye hear that, mon?"


"I have no mother, sergeant," replied Robert; "she died soon after giving me birth; and my poor father has long since gone to his long home. But while passing through this, my native town, I could not forbear weeping. I thought it might be the last time that I should behold the scenes of my early youth."

"Aweel, aweel! a gude night's rest will prepare you for to-morrow's march."

The sun rose the next morning in peerless beauty; and scarcely had his radiant beams lighted up the face of nature, when the party resumed their march. Nothing particular occurred till they reached the place of their destination. In the regiment Robert found

several of the most desperate characters. Their blasphemous expressions, their obscene conversation, their infidel practices, at first caused him to shudder. But a more intimate acquaintance with them, tended to initiate him into all their horrid vices ; and in a short time he avowed himself an atheist.

Being naturally quick-tempered, and having shaken off the restraints of that religion which would have checked the violence of his spirit, he became more and more dissatisfied with his subordinate situation in the army, and was impatient of the authority of his officers. On one occasion he peremptorily refused to obey the orders of the sergeant ; and in the heat of his passion attempted to strike him. This being reported, he was sentenced to receive two hundred lashes. This inhuman punishment, under the infliction of which he several times fainted, instead of subduing the turbulence of his spirit, rendered him desperate ; and he subsequently determined to desert. At the time when the regiment was in expectation of being called to join the forces



already stationed on the continent, he suddenly left the neighborhood, accompanied by a female of light character, with whom he had formed an intimacy during his residence in the barracks. The fugitives hurried to London, and took lodgings in one of the back alleys, in a crowded part of the city. Here the unhappy man supposed himself free from detection. But at the expiration of a fortnight, as he was ruminating on his future prospects and pursuits, the door of his apartment was opened, and two soldiers belonging to his regiment entered the room in which he was sitting. The deserter uttered a wild scream of horror, and a death-like paleness overspread his countenance. Seeing the futility of attempting any resistance, he at once surrendered himself to their custody.

"But," said he, "was it by human or diabolical agency that you were directed here? In this solitary room I thought myself secure from all apprehension of pursuit."

"We have to thank your *fair* companion," replied one of the soldiers, "for giving us in-

telligence of your snug retreat. She appears to have had more love for the money which she hopes to obtain for your arrest, than for her soldier-laddie."

At this information, the eyes of the deserter seemed to start from their sockets; and for a moment he stood motionless as a statue.

"Comrades," he at length exclaimed, "I will be revenged! Before I leave this hated place, I will be her executioner. Then I shall be prepared to face my own."

"That is not in your power, my gallant fellow," was the laconic reply; "the wily hussy knows better than to return till you are purified from the smoke of London. Did you not observe how nimbly she sallied out of the room when we entered? And perhaps you were too much agitated to notice the arch smile that played upon her *beautiful* features, when she found that you were so soon to become our prisoner!"

Robert made no reply; and in a sullen mood left the house, accompanied by the soldiers.

It will be unnecessary to recount the various incidents which attended the party during their melancholy journey, or the fearful forebodings of the unhappy man respecting the fate that awaited him; the shame and confusion which covered his face, when encountering the officers of the regiment; or the particulars of his trial before a court-martial. By that rigid tribunal he was sentenced to be shot.

The wretched criminal was then removed to the condemned cell, the solitude of which but too well accorded with the melancholy reflections he was indulging respecting his approaching fate. In the evening he was visited by a pious clergyman, who entered his cell for the purpose of preparing him for the premature death that awaited him, by directing him to the Saviour, and by imparting the consolations of religion to one who was already on the brink of the eternal world. Long did he discourse on the awful nature of sin; of the unmerited love of Christ in laying down his life a ransom for a guilty world;

THE BACKSLIDER.

of the willingness of God to pardon and receive the chief of sinners. "My son," said he, "are you not sensible of your sin? Are you not melted with a sense of that love which was displayed on the blood-stained cross? Are you not willing to embrace such a Saviour, and accept his overtures of mercy? Speak, my son; and let me hope that in the eleventh hour of your existence you will make a surrender of your heart to God!" Robert spoke not. A determined sullenness still sat upon his countenance.

"What is your age?" asked the minister.

"I am twenty-five," was the reply.

"Are your parents living?"

"No: they are both dead."

"Doubtless you have friends."

"None that I care about."

"But, my son, there is a Friend that cares for *you*,—One who is not willing that you should perish. He is a 'Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.' Will you not conciliate his friendship? Will you not come to him, that you may have life? Remember,

you will shortly have to appear before his awful tribunal; and there is but a step between you and death! Do, for God's sake, for your soul's sake; nay, for *my* sake." Here the aged minister's feelings overpowered him; and he wept on the bosom of the hardened youth. "Listen to the word of exhortation. Learn to subdue that stubbornness of will. Humble yourself before God. On the borders of the grave he offers you pardon—a pardon bought with blood! Repent, before it be too late. 'For now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.'"

Alas! the counsels of the venerable man were disregarded; and to his earnest exhortations the relentless prisoner turned a deaf ear. It was too evident that his heart had become callous, and his affections alienated from God, through the deceitfulness of sin. He maintained the same insensibility, the same sullenness of temper, during the remainder of his incarceration in the gloomy cell.

At length the hour appointed for the exe-

cation arrived. The fatal morning was already "spread upon the mountains." For the last time Robert beheld its dawning light gradually returning to the damp walls of his dreary prison. The sun rose in splendor, shedding his earliest beams on the lofty turrets which proudly nodded over the military fortress. The soldiers were on the parade; their sable plumes waving in the breeze, and their brightly-polished arms glittering in the solar rays. Presently they began to move in slow procession; while the dismal notes of the muffled drum were heard, beating to the "dead march," interrupted at intervals by the shrill tremor of the fifes. Agreeably to the directions of the adjutant, they formed themselves into a square, towards the extremity of which the prisoner, having his hands bound, walked with solemn steps, accompanied by the clergyman, whose pious instructions, though as yet unsuccessful, were continued with equal earnestness. The coffin which was shortly to receive his mutilated remains, was borne before him. Most of the

regiment seemed greatly affected by the appearance of the youthful victim. His tall commanding figure; his handsome features, rendered still more interesting by the paleness which overspread them; and the undaunted firmness with which he appeared to contemplate the awful scene, struck them with a degree of awe; and the moisture was seen to fill the eyes of many a hardy soldier who had never wept before.

"I cannot leave you," said the clergyman, addressing himself to the prisoner, who was now kneeling on his coffin,^c "I cannot leave you without experiencing the most distressing feelings, unless I witness you making a final appeal to Heaven for mercy. Think, my son, in a few minutes that coffin will contain your lifeless corpse! O think, you are about to appear before a higher tribunal than that which has sentenced you to a temporal death. If you die unpardoned, unconverted, your sentence will be that of *eternal death*."

"I know it," said the youth, with his usual

^c See Frontispiece.

coolness: "*I have preached to others, and now I am myself a castaway.* But from the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your unremitting attention. May your exhortations be more successful with others than they have been with me!"

The clergyman was about to retire.

"Stop," said Robert, "stop one moment more. I have a request to make—it is the request of a dying man. Pride has been my ruin: the indulgence of that hateful passion first turned me from the way of righteousness. *In your future ministrations, fail not to bring before your hearers my wretched example, as a warning to backsliders.* And now farewell forever."

The party who had been appointed to the melancholy office, now received the awful word to fire. In an instant the surrounding rocks reverberated with the fatal report, and Robert was hurried into eternity.

Mary Ashford.

"There grew a lily in the vale,
Bedeck'd in robes of snowy white;
Long did its balmy scent exhale,—
Long did its modest hue delight.

"That flower, alas! untimely doom!
Now here reclines its wither'd head;
Divested of its virgin bloom,
Its leaves despoil'd, its fragrance fled."

DURING the summer of 1817, the inhabitants of Birmingham, and many of the neighboring parishes, were thrown into a greater excitement than had been experienced in those localities for several years. This excitement was occasioned by the afflictive intelligence, that an interesting young female, of the name of Mary Ashford, who was well known in the neighborhood, had been brutally maltreated and murdered near the village of Erdington. At that time I was residing in Birmingham; and though more than thirty years have rolled

away since that fatal occurrence, I have not forgotten the feeling of horror and disgust which this diabolical act produced on all classes of society; nor the intense interest which universally prevailed to bring the murderer to justice. Such was the general sympathy which the fate of the unfortunate girl had awakened, that for many weeks this affecting subject formed the principal topic of conversation.

Mary Ashford was the daughter of a respectable farmer, who resided in a populous village, beautifully situated in the vicinity of Sutton-Coldfield. When I was yet a boy, I remember having seen her on many occasions in the Birmingham market, which she frequently attended for the purpose of selling butter, eggs, and poultry. She was much respected by her neighbors, and greatly esteemed by those who were more intimately acquainted with her. On the 27th of May, in the year 1817, she attended a ball, which was held at an inn, at Erdington, only a moderate distance from her father's house.

When the festivities of the evening had terminated, having no personal friend or relative present, a young man from Castle-Bromwich, of the name of Abraham Thornton, who was well known in that locality for his libertine principles, offered to conduct her home. She availed herself of his services, and they left the inn together. On the following morning, however, the corpse of Mary, which presented marks of brutal violence, was discovered, lying in a shallow pond, at the edge of a field, about a mile from the inn. As Thornton had promised to see her home, and being the last person seen in her company, suspicion of course rested upon him, as being the perpetrator of the barbarous deed. He was accordingly apprehended, and lodged in the county gaol. During the trial, which took place at the next assizes, the most intense and extensive interest was felt throughout the country. But as no direct proof of guilt could be adduced against the prisoner, except what was considered to be strong *circumstantial* evidence, he was acquitted. This verdict was by no

means satisfactory to the county; nor, indeed, to the country at large; so that, by the advice of the counsel for the prosecution, the case was referred to the Court of King's Bench, in London; and it was not till the 16th of April, in the following year, that the proceedings were brought to a final close. The judges, on that day, pronounced their opinion that "this was a case in which, by law, as it at present stands, they were bound to give the defendant the right of trial by battle." The counsel for the plaintiff, in consequence, declined to make any further prayer to the court, which ordered the discharge of the appellee. This barbarous law, namely, Trial by Battle, was subsequently rescinded by the legislature from the Statutes of England.

The notorious Thornton, pursued by universal obloquy and suspicion, was compelled to leave his native country; and, it is reported, died a few years since in America.

A short time since, I had occasion to visit the neighborhood where the circumstances

which gave rise to these proceedings had occurred. On a beautiful morning in spring, I resolved to take a solitary walk to the church-yard of Sutton-Coldfield, where the remains of poor Mary had been laid. The sun had nearly attained its meridian, and was gilding the "old gray tower" of the church with its resplendent beams, when I entered, through a little gate, this depository of the dead. I love to saunter in a country church-yard, and to gaze upon the rising hillocks which mark the "sleeping beds" of those who once, perhaps, had acted a conspicuous part on the busy stage of life; or to read the "uncouth rhymes" graven on the stones, many of which cannot fail to procure the "passing tribute of a sigh."

On this occasion my thoughts reverted to the past. During the many years that had elapsed since I last rambled through this place of sepulture, how many of the villagers, some of whom I had known in my boyish days, and whose cheeks were then crimsoned with the flush of health, were laid in the silent grave! "How many of these had since re-

turned to this spot; yea, but to tarry here; to occupy the home appointed for all living; to lie down and sleep, undisturbed by winter winds, or summer storms; unawakened by the chime of the church-going bells when they summon hither the Sabbath congregation; or by the voices of those they loved in life, who pass by their lowly graves, already, perhaps, forgetful of the "form beloved" so recently deposited there!"

I, too, must die; and the glorious sun, in whose beams I have so often rejoiced, will shortly shine on the turf that covers my cold remains. O may I be found ready when the final summons shall arrive! May this immortal spirit be purified in the blood of Christ, from the last vestige of inbred corruption, that I may "pass through death triumphant home!"

In the midst of these solemn thoughts which I had been indulging, while wandering through the church-yard, I at length discovered the spot which I was so anxious to see,—the resting-place of Mary Ashford. On


her premature grave a tomb-stone had been erected, on which was engraven the following pathetic inscription :—

“ AS A WARNING TO FEMALE VIRTUE,
AND A HUMBLE MONUMENT TO FEMALE CHASTITY,
THIS STONE MARKS THE GRAVE OF
MARY ASHFORD,
WHO, IN THE 20TH YEAR OF HER AGE, HAVING
INCAUTIOUSLY REPAIRED TO A SCENE OF AMUSE-
MENT, WITHOUT PROPER PROTECTION,
WAS SHAMEFULLY ILL-USED AND MURDERED,
ON THE 27TH OF MAY, 1817.

Lovely and chaste, as is the primrose pale,
Rifled of sweetness by the passing gale :
Mary, the wretch who thee remorseless slew,
Avenging wrath, which sleeps not, will pursue !
What though the deed of blood be veil'd in night,
‘ Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?’
Fair, blighted flower ! the muse that mourns thy doom,
Rears o’er thy murder’d form this warning tomb.”

These affecting lines were written, I believe, by the late Dr. Booker, Vicar of Dudley.

A consideration of the particulars contained in this inscription, may suggest a few serious thoughts, no less profitable than instructive.

"She repaired to a scene of amusement." I have always regarded public places of amusement as irrational, vain, and foolish. They furnish no incitement to the cultivation of virtuous principles; but present innumerable temptations to inflame the animal passions, and to demoralize the mind. Whether we include, under this head, the theatre, the ball-room, the tavern, the card-table, or those fashionable scenes of depravity, which of late years have so thickly risen up, especially in the vicinities of large towns, under the specious appellation of "tea-gardens,"—as all these places are generally  resort of the thoughtless and profane, they open a "broad and flowery avenue to the bottomless pit." By seeking amusement in such places, what multitudes of the young, of both sexes, whose previous inclinations had been partially regulated by just and proper notions of Christian rectitude, have been led imperceptibly into a love of sinful pleasure; till, by a gradual process, they have been eventually schooled in the hellish principles of infidelity! The conversation,

the company, the alluring scenes which they have witnessed, by exciting their criminal desires, have unfitted them for serious meditation, created in their minds a love of sensual enjoyment, and initiated them into all the mysteries of iniquity! The rage for such immoral pleasures, in this day of luxury and dissipation, is a melancholy proof of our degeneracy from the simplicity of the gospel; and highly reproachful to a nation professing the Christian religion.

Remember, my young friends, it was in a ball-room that Mary spent the last evening of her life. And can you imagine that, in the midst of the noise and merriment, the roar of laughter, and the glow of spirits, excited by the music and the dancing, her heart was right with God? Were recreations such as these, adapted to the case of one who might strictly and literally have exclaimed, during the pauses of the dance, "There is but a step between me and death!" And were such amusements calculated, in the eleventh hour of her existence, to qualify her im-

mortal soul for the enjoyments of heaven? Would the recollection of those scenes awaken in her youthful bosom any pleasing sensations, any godly emotions, when, unable to resist the strength of the murderer's arm, she felt that her hour was come?

The memorial on her tomb also states that she was *unprotected*. "She incautiously repaired to a scene of amusement without proper protection." Had she availed herself of the protection of her friends, the personal danger to which she was exposed might have been less; but the sin of repairing to such a place, at her tender age, for the sole purpose of amusement, will not admit of any excuse. Such a proceeding was obviously at variance with the precepts of Scripture, where the young especially are cautioned against conformity to the world. But she went *unprotected*: therefore her reputation was in greater danger. The company who frequent such places, are not in general the persons to whom a young and unprotected female may look with confidence for succor. The very individual to whose care

she committed herself at the close of the dance, is supposed to have been the violator of her person, and the destroyer of her life !

As a sincere friend to the young, I would wish them to be constantly on their guard against the alluring snares which lurk under the mask of feigned esteem. Their tender minds are too susceptible of passions which may, if inordinately indulged, prove their ruin. They are also too ready to put the most favorable construction upon outward appearances, which, in many cases, are fallacious. Chastity does not consist in insensibility to the passions, or freedom from them, but in their right government. The pleasure which is derived from subduing an inordinate desire, or denying an impetuous appetite, is infinitely greater than any which may be derived from any sensual gratification.

But it is often pleaded on behalf of youth, that theirs is the season of pleasure, the spring morning of enjoyment: hence they easily persuade themselves to believe there is no harm in visiting places of amusement; or

in joining convivial parties, where they can spend their evenings in social mirth. Thus thousands have reasoned, till the love of pleasure has so far predominated over their reason, that they have steeled their hearts against the truth as it is in Jesus. Relaxation from study, or from business, is not only allowable, but necessary for the young. But those relaxations are not to be sought in the society of the ungodly, amidst scenes of folly and dissipation—or in those synagogues of Satan—where many a hopeful youth, by forming fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, has sunk deeper and deeper into sin, till, having filled up the measure of his iniquities, he has become fitted for destruction.

The only rational mode of seeking substantial happiness, is to aim after the possession of true religion. It is this which gives the “promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” On this subject many young persons have formed the most erroneous opinions. They have mistaken the real nature of the Christian religion, by clothing

it with gloom and melancholy. It has thus become unamiable in their eyes. Did they but *feel* its power in their hearts,—did they *live* under its hallowing influence, they would experience its ennobling joys! Its very nature is social, kind, and cheerful; and its tendency is to make the soul uniformly happy. It leads to enjoyments which are pure and lasting; and teaches its followers to “rejoice evermore,” as well as “in everything to give thanks.”

My young friends, receive the word of exhortation. Break off, at once, all connection with evil-doers. Relinquish those desires for worldly amusement which present so many excitements to sin. Cease to do evil; learn to do well.

“Time flies, death urges, knells call, heaven invites,
Hell threatens,—all exerts.”

“Remember always, that the years that now pass over your heads, leave permanent memorials behind them. From your thoughtless minds they may escape; but they remain

in the remembrance of God. They form an important part of the register of your life. They will hereafter bear testimony, either for or against you, at that day, when for all your actions, but particularly for the employments of youth, you must give an account to God." Therefore, watch, pray, believe. Let the morning of your life be spent in laying up treasure in heaven, and in seeking a meetness for its never-ending enjoyments. Make the Scriptures your daily study, and the constant rule of your conduct. And though, in attending to these essential duties, you may be persecuted by the enemies of the cross,—be not afraid: greater is He that is for you, than all that can be against you. Thus you will insure the testimony of a good conscience; and the peace of God, "which passeth all understanding," will support your minds under all the vicissitudes of life.

A Distressed Poet.

“Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”—GRAY.

THE late Dr. Currie, in his *Life of Burns*, the Scottish poet, observes: “It has been too much the custom to consider the possession of poetical talents as excluding the possibility of application to the severer branches of study; and as in some degree incapacitating the possessor from attaining those habits which are necessary to success in the details of business, and in the engagements of active life. It has been common for persons conscious of such talents, to look with a sort of disdain on other kinds of intellectual excellence; and to consider themselves as in some degree absolved from those rules of prudence by which humbler minds are restricted. They are too much

disposed to abandon themselves to their own sensations, and to suffer life to pass away without regular exertion, or settled purpose. But though men of genius are generally prone to indolence, with them indolence and unhappiness are in a more special manner allied. The unbidden splendors of imagination may indeed at times irradiate the gloom which inactivity produces; but such visions, though bright, are transient, and serve to cast the realities of life into deeper shade."

In applying these observations to the unfortunate individual, whose literary career I will briefly exhibit in this chapter, the reader will at once perceive the justness of their applicability. Like the unhappy Savage, he was "doomed to poverty and obscurity, and launched upon the ocean of life, only that he might be swallowed by its quicksands, or dashed upon its rocks."

George Davis was born in Wood-street, Birmingham, about the year 1768. As it was only in the latter period of his life that I obtained a personal acquaintance with him, I

cannot, of course, say anything of his early years, further than what I occasionally gathered from himself during the several conversations I held with him. His parents were poor,—miserably poor,—and unable, from the want of pecuniary resources, to give him even the rudiments of education. But when he had attained his tenth year, some respectable individual, who had discovered in George a precocity of genius, and some striking indications of talent, succeeded in placing him in the Free Grammar School, founded in the reign of Edward the Sixth. Here he found ample scope for the cultivation of his intellect; and having, by unwearied perseverance in study, passed through several of the higher classes, he had the satisfaction of receiving from the head master the most flattering encomiums for proficiency in learning. He continued in King Edward's School till he arrived at the age of fourteen. He was then apprenticed to Mr. Swinney, the publisher of the Birmingham and Stafford Chronicle, to learn the art of printing. Here he made rapid progress in his

business, and occasionally contributed pieces to the poetical department of the paper; and these early productions of his muse were much admired. But laboring in the same office with persons of intemperate habits, and having no pious friend whose counsel might have restrained him from vice, no companion whose holy example might have lured him to the practice of Christian duty, he gradually became initiated into the follies and levities of youth. During the term of his apprenticeship he lost his mother; and about the close of it, death deprived him also of his father.

In the twenty-fourth year of his age, he formed a matrimonial engagement with an interesting young female, who resided in his own neighborhood. Every arrangement was made, and even the day was appointed for the solemnization of a union from which he fondly anticipated much domestic comfort. But a trial awaited him which he had never contemplated,—a calamity which destroyed his expectations, extinguished the last gleam of hope that animated his bosom, and dashed aside the

cup of anticipated pleasure, when just presented to his lips. The object of his early attachment was suddenly attacked by a fatal disease, which was then prevalent in the town; and the day which had been fixed on for the celebration of the marriage, saw her cold remains committed to the dust.

From his childhood, the heart of Davis had been imbued with a morbid sensibility which rendered him peculiarly excitable. External circumstances produced the most painful impressions on his mind; and the influence of those impressions became too often the main-springs of his actions. With such a constitutional temperament, it is no wonder that this afflictive stroke fell heavily on the heart of Davis, and opened widely the latent springs of sorrow. But being a stranger to religion, he was unsupported by the consolations of the gospel. When the divine decree was yet sounding in his ears, "Son of man, behold I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke!" instead of bowing to the will of God, or calmly submitting to the stroke; instead

of drinking of the streams of comfort which flow from the Fountain of living waters, by which his afflicted spirit might have been refreshed, he sought an alleviation of his grief in the chambers of intemperance, and grasped with avidity the intoxicating cup which was to drown his melancholy reflections.

From this time he abandoned himself to dissipation, neglected his business, and by his continued excesses became the pitiable object of disease and poverty during the remainder of his life. Of this he was himself sensible, as will appear from an elegy which he published on the occasion, and in which his feelings and sufferings are most affectingly expressed. This elegy I have seen in his own handwriting; but from the number of years which have elapsed, I can only recollect the following fragments :—

“ Grief urged the drought which first impair’d my health,
And brought on premature old age by stealth :
For grief has long, too long, protracted thought,
And forced an inundation from the drought.

° ° ° ° °

When last I saw thee in death's fatal grasp,
And nature shudder'd at her finite gasp ;—
When from thy cheeks the blooming roses fled,
And the pale lilies wanton'd in their stead ;—

 o o o o o
And when to company I headlong run,
As if in greedy haste to be undone,—
The jest, the song, and all the sprightly glee,
Perpetual mementoes are of thee ;
Which sometimes must disturb me as I pass
On, to the last sad sand-grain of my glass."

The indolent disposition of Davis, the necessary consequence of his intemperate habits, had now utterly disqualified him for his usual occupation. He had no firmness of mind, no stability, no fixedness of purpose. A growing lassitude had imperceptibly enervated his mental energies ; and no one was disposed to employ him. He was therefore obliged to seek some other means by which to gain a subsistence. He at once entered the inviting field of *poesy* ; and as his former lucubrations had secured him a large share of popular applause, he was enabled by the fresh productions of his muse, to realize considerable pecuniary benefit. He wrote much : and most of

his pieces were characterized by loftiness of thought, and purity of language; so that, notwithstanding the manner of his life, in a short time his reputation as a poet became established in his native town.

It will be needless to recount the sufferings which he endured, or to paint the scenes of poverty and privation through which he was destined to pass, in his declining years, and to which his own imprudence had paved the way. He might have secured the esteem, and lived in the affections, of a large portion of the more respectable inhabitants of the town, who were charmed with the beauty of his verses, and who had contributed liberally towards his support. But his intemperate habits becoming more and more disgusting, it is no wonder that the number of his patrons was gradually diminished. His frequent and importunate appeals for additional supplies of money, also wearied his more intimate friends; so that he had the mortification of finding himself slighted and neglected by those who had formerly caressed him. In

this state he wandered about the neighborhood as an idle vagrant, whom no one cared to notice. He would often, in the day time, when the weather permitted, stroll into the fields, and sit for hours beneath the shade of some spreading tree, or by the side of a flowing rivulet, for the purpose of study; and in the evening return to some well-known public-house, where he could exhibit to the company the latest offspring of his muse, with no expectation of receiving any other remuneration than a supper and a supply of drink. On other occasions, he would take a number of copies of his favorite pieces, and carry them to his few remaining friends, from whom he seldom failed to obtain some additional help. For many years this was the only means by which he was preserved from absolute want.

At length his health totally failed; and with a shattered constitution, and a spirit broken and depressed by a long series of trials, he sought an asylum in the Birmingham workhouse. Here he continued for some time, till death closed his career. He died in

the winter of 1819, in the fifty-first year of his age. His emaciated remains were placed in a parish coffin, and subsequently interred in a parish grave, in St. Philip's church-yard.

What became of his manuscripts I could never learn. That he had a large collection, is certain ; for I have seen in his possession sufficient to fill a moderate volume. I have made many inquiries among his quondam friends ; but could never receive any satisfactory account of them.

This brief but affecting sketch may furnish some useful hints to the general reader. I will, therefore, close this sketch with a few observations by way of caution and instruction.

1. In the painful disappointment which Davis was called to experience, I have already stated that he sought an alleviation of his grief in the inebriating cup. By this fearful expedient, he certainly realized a momentary relief, a temporary oblivion of his sorrows ; but when that evanescent feeling had subsided,—when that unsubstantial gratification

had passed away,—he painfully felt that the antidote was far more distressing than the disease; and that in seeking rest for his afflicted spirit in the chambers of intemperance and revelry, he had gone to “broken cisterns that can hold no water.” There is a Book which contains more genuine poetry than is found in any human composition, and more true philosophy than was ever learned in the schools of Greece and Rome. Had he consulted that Book, or had recourse to its sacred pages in the acme of his wretchedness, he would have found an antidote which no human skill could have prescribed; and in applying to himself that simple promise, “My grace is sufficient for thee,” a heavenly influence would have stilled the tumult of his unhappy bosom.

2. Davis was a man of an uncommon genius, and the productions of his intellect were duly appreciated by the literati of his day; but poverty and misery were his constant attendants through life, and in the humiliating garb of a pauper, he encountered

death within the walls of a parish workhouse. But it will be seen from the preceding account, that the poverty of his life, and the misery of his dying hour, were the consequence of his own imprudence, and could only be attributable to the idle and dissolute course which he had so long and so fatally pursued. In his case, the sentiment of Solomon is affectingly illustrated: "The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall cover a man with rags." The brightest displays of talent, and the most rapid advances in the march of intellect, will never be able to wipe away the reproach which must always attach itself to a life of debauchery; neither, with all their concomitant advantages, will they be found sufficient to ward off the horrors of penury, where indolence and dissipation accelerate their approach.

3. Religion, "pure and undefiled," is the only source of happiness. Here we find the proper antidote to the miseries of human life. Had the unhappy subject of this sketch hum-

bled himself before God, and, as a penitent sinner, availed himself of the glorious provisions of the gospel, through faith in the Divine Mediator, what painful sufferings he might have escaped! What strong consolations he might have secured! The productions of his pen, being the inspirations of a higher spirit, would have contributed to his fame as a *Christian* poet, and proved a rich accession to the number of the songs of Zion. Alas! it was the want of religion that paved his path through life with unnumbered sorrows, and threw a cloud of despondency over his troubled spirit, when struggling with the angel of death.

Reader, take warning before it be too late. "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom." For "he that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul; he that keepeth understanding shall find good."

The Cottage of Content.

"In winter's tedious nights, sit by the fire,
With good old folks,—
And ere you bid good night, to quit their grief,
Tell them the lamentable fate of me;
And send the hearers weeping to their beds."

IN the neighborhood of Birmingham, and in the westerly direction from the town, there is (or was, some few years since) a beautifully picturesque lane, on one side of which stood a solitary house, built in the fashion of the olden time, and presenting a peculiarly rustic appearance. On the front of the building might be seen, in large characters, this significant inscription, "THE COTTAGE OF CONTENT." Hayley, the poet, who appears to have visited the place, has expressed his sentiments in the following sonnet, which he wrote after his visit, and which was printed in the old "Birmingham Chronicle," bearing date June 8, 1799:—

"And thou wert rightly call'd, sweet cottage! could the mind
 Recall at once her doating fancies home;
 Give all her warm affections to the wind,
 Without a pang to part, or wish again to roam.

"But not the yew-tree bower,—no, nor the arbor neat,
 Nor ivy'd casement gleaming through the shade,
 Where whispering lovers tread with noiseless feet,
 Can soothe the *joyless* breast, by moping misery made.

"No—for unseen I mark'd the fond Fidele's face,
 And as her tongue thy bounded beauties praised,
 My own experienced soul too well could trace
 Her stifled sigh's sad source, and look to heaven upraised!
 View the strain'd lustre of her starry eyes,
 That seem'd to pass o'er space, and penetrate the skies."

The inscription on the building, however, was specious, intended more to attract the eye of the passenger, than to minister comfort to a "mind diseased." For the "Cottage of Content" was a place of public entertainment—a tavern, with a beautiful garden, containing several pleasant arbors adorned with syLVAN taste, and covered with evergreens—for the accommodation of the numerous visitors. Though, in point of situation, "The Cottage of Content" was more romantic, and presented more rural attractions, it was of

the same character as the fashionable tea-gardens which so injuriously abound in the suburbs of the gay metropolis.

St. Paul says, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be CONTENT." But where did he learn this salutary lesson? Not in places of public amusement, amidst the roar of merriment; not in the bowers of rustic elegance, or sweet elysian fields. At the *foot of the cross* he obtained deliverance from the burden of his sins; and the Eternal Spirit, by whose agency he was enabled to rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God, taught him to be content to suffer affliction, persecution, and imprisonment, and even to "die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

The "Cottage of Content" is no longer an attraction to the mechanics of Birmingham. It was pulled down a few years ago to make room for modern improvements; and over its well-remembered site a railway-bridge has subsequently been erected. In reviewing its history, during the last half century, how

many mournful reminiscences involuntarily force themselves upon the mind ! How many affecting instances might be adduced, as illustrative of the demoralizing tendency of such places of public resort ! How many a mother's heart has bled on witnessing the provision of her impoverished family wasted at the misnamed "Cottage of Content !" What scenes of wretchedness and degradation might be traced to the pernicious habit of frequenting such places, especially on the Sabbath, for idle recreation !

The particulars contained in the following narrative occurred when I was a schoolboy in the neighborhood ; and though personally unacquainted with the parties, I have stated the facts as they were communicated to me shortly after the period of their occurrence.

Should this pathetic narrative meet the eye of any young man who has already been lured, by the siren voice of pleasure, to wander on such forbidden ground, I trust the affecting incidents here recorded will lead him to sober reflection, and induce him to re-

trace his steps before iniquity be his ruin. Or if he is only *approaching the fearful threshold*; if his heart has not yet become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; let this moving exhibition constrain him to PAUSE, and to seek the aid of divine grace to enable him to withstand the allurements to a life of sinful pleasure, which would inevitably terminate in misery and disgrace.

Richard ——— was a native of Birmingham. At the period from which I shall commence the history of his chequered life, he had just attained the twenty-fourth year of his age. He possessed a cultivated mind, having received a liberal education at the Free Grammar-School in the town, which was founded in the reign of King Edward the Sixth. His manners were fascinating, and his disposition was generous and open. But he possessed a susceptible heart, which, when his judgment and conscience did not preserve their just control, rendered him liable to imposition from pretended friends; and (as the succeeding

pages will show) to become the dupe of the crafty and designing. He had been for some time united to an amiable young female, named Maria ; and a sweet little boy, about two years old, increased their domestic comfort.

Richard held a lucrative situation in one of the most respectable mercantile houses in the town ; and, by unwearied diligence in the prosecution of the duties which devolved upon him, he had secured the confidence and esteem of his employers. His prospects in life were, therefore, bright and cheering, and his domestic peace was unruffled. The sunshine of hope visited the inmost recesses of his soul ; till an unhappy deviation from the path of rectitude, and an obstinate perseverance in the "way of the ungodly," spread a cloud over his horizon, and veiled his joys in darkness.

"Fair, but specious, are the paths of delusive vice. There every object tends to subvert the mind, sully its purity, weaken its noble energies, and destroy its peace. There lies, in dread concealment, the barbed arrow

of insatiate death; and many, in the hour of false security, fall its victims."

One Sunday afternoon, in the summer of 18—, Richard left his happy dwelling for the purpose of taking a solitary walk in the suburbs of the town; intending to return in sufficient time to accompany his wife to their usual place of worship. While he was surveying the ruins of the once-splendid mansion erected by BASKERVILLE, the celebrated typographer, and ruminating on the infatuation of the misguided populace, who had wantonly set it on fire, two young men, with whom he had only a slight acquaintance, suddenly made their appearance.

"Mr. —," said the elder of them, "we are going to the 'Cottage of Content,' to spend an hour. It is a beautiful place, and situated on a lovely spot. You are fond of romantic scenery: will you accompany us?"

"I cannot," was the reply: "I have engaged to be at home by five o'clock."

"But it is now only three. You can visit the Cottage, and still fulfill your appointment."

Richard hesitated; but was at length induced to accompany them. After strolling about the garden for a quarter of an hour, they seated themselves in one of the booths, which afforded an agreeable shade from the sultry beams of the sun. Refreshments were called for,—bottled porter among them. Richard was fascinated; and so delighted with the conversation of his new associates, that, for a time, the remembrance of home passed away from his mind. He took out his watch; the hand pointed to seven. Wondering at his forgetfulness, and blaming himself for the uneasiness which his long absence would occasion his wife, he rose to depart.

“Stop,” said one of his companions, “we must have a little wine, and drink your wife’s health. She is one of the best of women. I am sure she will not chide you for spending a pleasant evening with those who value the friendship of her husband.”

Her health was accordingly pledged. Richard felt flattered by the compliment, not knowing that it was but a bait, a wily pretext, to

protract his stay in the garden. Alas! the god of this world had blinded his eyes; nor was he at the moment sensible of the fascination which had already enchained his faculties. He became more and more elated by the wine which he drank; and it was not till the sun had long sunk behind the western hills that he arose from his seat. After declaring to his companions that it was one of the most agreeable evenings he had ever spent, he defrayed the whole of the expense, and returned home, where he arrived just as the clock was striking ten.

I have been the more minute in detailing these occurrences, because they issued in consequences the most fearful and heart-rending. This evening proved the commencement of a life of dissipation, which caused the degradation and ruin of the unhappy man.

Each succeeding Sabbath found him at the "Cottage of Content," or some other place of public entertainment. The devotions of the closet were abandoned, the family altar was broken down, and the house of God altogether

neglected. Nor was he satisfied with this wanton desecration of the Lord's-day in the pursuit of worldly pleasure: he often met his companions in an adjoining tavern on the week nights, when the business of the day was over. His wife beheld this awful change in his habits with painful forebodings; but to her mild but just reproaches he invariably turned a deaf ear. Often, after committing her darling babe to rest, did she sit in the solitude of her apartment, waiting his return, till her heart was lacerated with grief, and her eyes were swollen with weeping.

It is not surprising that this course of intemperance, on the part of Richard, should eventually lead to some derelictions of duty, the knowledge of which would prove detrimental to his pecuniary resources. His employers became dissatisfied with his inattention, and disgusted with his general proceedings; and, after exercising much forbearance, they dismissed him from their service. This afflictive intelligence was communicated in a letter, which fell into the hands of his wife as she was

one morning nursing her sick child. Richard shortly afterwards entered the room, and, after perusing the letter, sat down in a sullen, melancholy mood. The tender child, who was now about three years of age, and who had recently seen but little of his father, crept across the room with feeble steps, and, essaying to climb his knees, lisped, "Kiss me, papa!" Richard, who was at the time absorbed in his own gloomy thoughts, and dwelling, in imagination, on the darkening future, pushed the child aside. The little innocent burst into tears, and hastily sought an asylum in the arms of his mother. "Richard," said the latter, "the child is ill, and, I fear, will not be here long to trouble you. Is it not enough that by your intemperance and folly you have brought us to beggary? If you have no affection for *me*, do not steel your heart against that poor boy. He will soon be with his Saviour in a better world."

The rebuke came as a dagger to the heart of the wretched man. Instantly rising from his seat, he attempted to kiss his afflicted off-

spring; but the delicate child, apparently frightened at his angry looks, shrank from his caresses, and began to cling more closely to his mother.

In a state of wild excitement Richard left the house, and, after making many unsuccessful applications for employment, he returned home at a late hour in the evening.

"How is the child?" was his first inquiry on entering the house.

"Look there!" said his wife, pointing to a little bed in the corner of the room.

Removing the white coverlet, under which he was concealed, the distracted father gave an involuntary shriek of horror on beholding the *corpse* of his only child. His heart was melted; and he literally bathed the pallid face of the inanimate body with his scalding tears.

This bereavement, however, so sudden and so unexpected, was followed by beneficial results to the unhappy parent. It proved, by the providence of God, the means of his conversion. Previous to this event, every effort

to reclaim him was ineffectual. The admonitions of his wife were disregarded ; the strivings of the Holy Spirit were stifled ; the voice of conscience failed to awake him from the sleep of sin :—

“ But God, to save the father, took the son.”

During the whole of that memorable night, he wrestled earnestly with his Creator, whom he had so grievously offended by his sins ; and when the morning had begun to dawn into his gloomy apartment he was still upon his knees.

“ O thou compassionate Saviour !” he exclaimed, in a paroxysm of remorse, while the tears of contrition rolled down his sunken cheeks ; “ O thou compassionate Saviour ! forgive a repentant sinner ! cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.”

The violence of his feelings, and the intensity of his grief, appeared at length to prostrate his physical strength ; and in a state of utter exhaustion he threw himself on the floor,

exclaiming, "O Lord! I am oppressed; undertake for me!"

The season of deliverance was now come. He saw that there is a fullness in the divine atonement sufficient to meet the case of even "the chief of sinners," and he was enabled to rely on the blood of the everlasting covenant. The burden of guilt was removed, and peace and joy were diffused over his humbled and troubled spirit. The clouds which oppressed him were chased away; and the sunshine of heaven was once more imparted to his soul.

"Now," said he, rising to his feet with renovated strength, "now I can rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation!" and, embracing his wife with the tenderest affection, he entreated her forgiveness for the sufferings which his intemperance had occasioned.

A week passed away. The body of the babe had been laid in its final resting-place in the church-yard. Richard was still happy in the love of God; and he exerted himself assiduously to assist his amiable partner. But

he was yet without employment; and, in order to meet his present exigencies, was under the painful necessity of parting with several articles of furniture. Finding that his circumstances were becoming more and more embarrassed, and seeing no prospect of obtaining a situation in his native town, he resolved to visit London, where a situation had been already offered him by one of the partners in a respectable firm in that city.

This intention he communicated to Maria; and an arrangement was at once adopted to their mutual satisfaction. Richard engaged to be scrupulously economical in his expenditure, and to lay aside a certain sum out of his weekly earnings for three months; at the expiration of which period he would return to Birmingham to take his wife to London. It was arranged that Maria in the mean time should keep a little school, not doubting that, by the kindness of her neighbors, she would secure a sufficient number of scholars to enable her to procure the necessaries of life.

A small sum of money to defray his travel-

ing expenses, was furnished him by a few friends who were still interested in his welfare.

On the evening preceding the day of his departure, he took a ramble through the fields and lanes on the outskirts of the town, and cast a glance on the scenery which had often inspired his heart with romantic, enthusiastic sensations, even in the days of his boyhood. It was in autumn; and the evening was unusually fine. The sky was cloudless, and the luminary of day was sinking below the horizon. He listened to the soft murmur of the river Rea, whose gentle waters, taking a serpentine direction through the wide-spread valley, here and there broke into little cascades. He seated himself on a rustic stile, on which he had often rested on the beautiful evenings of summer. The moon arose in splendor; and by her silvery light he gazed on the surrounding objects, so familiar to his eye. The bells of St. Martin's church were ringing a merry peal; and their sweet music, wafted on the dying gale, was grateful to his

ear. He knelt down on the dewy grass, and, after returning to his heavenly Father his fervent thanksgivings for the unspeakable blessing which had recently been bestowed on him, he implored direction and help in his present emergency, and success in the journey which he was about to undertake. On concluding his prayer, thus offered in the silence of the night and the solitude of the fields, he retraced his steps to his still shadowed but now happily peaceful home.

I need not paint the parting scene, when on the morning of their separation Richard breathed a tender adieu to his weeping partner. Nor need I describe the emotions which agitated the bosom of the former when he took his seat on the coach, and subsequently beheld the spires of his native town receding in the distance. It will be sufficient to state, that he safely arrived in London, and succeeded in obtaining comfortable lodgings in Blackfriars' road.

The next day he entered on his new situation, where he continued to fulfill the duties

of his office with satisfaction to himself and fidelity to his employers; so that the latter were not only gratified by his uniform attention to business, but were pleased to express their entire approbation of his spirit and deportment.

In his domestic arrangements he was strictly economical, and rigidly temperate in his diet. He never indulged himself in any article of luxury. By adopting this frugal system, he was enabled to save the greater part of his salary; and at the expiration of three months (the time stipulated for his return to Birmingham) he found himself in possession of seven pounds. With a light heart he placed the money in his purse, and began to make the necessary arrangements for his departure.

It was a star-light evening when he left his lodgings, and forced his way through a crowded part of the city to the coach-office in Lad-lane. The weather was cold—intensely cold; for there had been a severe frost during several preceding days. The snow lay congealed on the ground, glittering in the rays

of the thousand lights which gleamed from the shop windows. But the pleasing anticipation that, within the space of a few hours, he should again behold his beloved Maria, gave buoyancy to his spirits; and he hurried along the streets, regardless of the fury of the northern blast. On arriving at the coach-office, he learned that the coach would not start for more than an hour. Scarcely knowing how to pass away the time, he loitered about that uninteresting locality for some minutes, when he was unfortunately recognized by two of his old companions—dissipated wretches—in whose contaminating society he had often wasted his time and money at the “Cottage of Content.” He endeavored to elude them. But this he found to be no easy task. They insisted on his accompanying them to a neighboring inn. He urged the recent change which had been produced in his sentiments, the altered tone of his feelings, and his fixed determination never again to enter a public house. This only excited their laughter.

"But," said he, "I have no time to spare. I am going to Birmingham by the first coach; and would not, on any account, disappoint my dear wife who is waiting my return."

"And yet you have abundance of time. The coach will not leave for three-quarters of an hour. We *must* take a parting glass together; perhaps we may never meet again."

With their "much fair speech" they caused him to yield; with the "flattering of their lips" they forced him; and he was led, or rather dragged, into the parlor of an adjoining inn.


The moments flew rapidly away; and after drinking several glasses of wine, Richard was about to leave the room, when one of the young men prevented him, exclaiming, "Resume your seat, my dear fellow. I will go to the office and see whether the coach is ready to start."

Ten minutes elapsed before he returned to the inn; during which time the bosom of Richard beat with feverish excitement. On his return, the wily youth appeared discon-

certed. "The coach," he said, "was already on its way to Birmingham; but another would leave the same office in less than two hours."

"But be not alarmed, my dear Richard," he continued: "you will be in Birmingham before the sun rises. Sit down, man, and enjoy yourself. You have treated us with wine, and now we will treat you with a glass of grog. It will arm you against the chilling atmosphere, and enable you to encounter the rigors of this frosty night."

The tears started into the eyes of Richard, and the color forsook his cheeks, at this unexpected occurrence. There was, however, no alternative; and he reluctantly resumed his seat between his two quondam friends, bitterly reproaching himself for being so infatuated as again to join their disgusting society. As he had for some time previously abstained from the use of wine and spirituous liquors, those stimulants, of which he had drunk freely, now began to operate powerfully on his reason; and at length drowsiness was induced. He leaned against the



back of his chair, and sunk into a profound sleep. On awaking, he found himself *alone*: his companions were gone! He rushed into the street, and soon arrived at the coach-office. The horses were already attached to the vehicle; and he put his hand into his pocket, for the purpose of paying his fare, when, to his horror and confusion, he discovered that his purse was gone! He had been robbed, during his sleep, by the two wretches who had seduced him into their company.

In a state of mind more easy to be conceived than described, and scarcely knowing what to do, or where to bend his course, he wandered from street to street, exposed to the biting frosty air. The wind was not, indeed, boisterous, but sharp and piercing. The sky was studded with innumerable stars; but they afforded no warmth to his shivering frame, as he hurriedly paced along the icy pavement. Thus, for the space of two hours, he passed through several of the streets and alleys of the city, till he found himself in the Borough, near St. George's church. At length, ex-

hausted, he threw himself on the cold ground, and inwardly muttered curses on his own folly, as the retrospect of the past rushed impetuously to his mind. His face was turned upwards to the starry heavens, and he thought of his home. The seat of reason began to totter; and, unable to bear the stings and arrows of his conscience, he sunk into a state of insensibility.

Bright and cloudless was the appearance of the winter sky, when, on the following morning, he awoke to life and consciousness. He was an inmate of St. Thomas's Hospital. He gazed, in dumb amazement, round the gloomy ward. His face was deathly pale, and it was evident his end was approaching. The lamp of life was flickering in its socket. Addressing the surgeon who stood at his bedside, he communicated his name; and with a feeble voice, gave the residence of his wife in Birmingham. On the evening of that day he was a corpse!

A letter was immediately forwarded to Maria; and she arrived in London barely in

time to see the husband of her youth committed to the silent dust.

Not long did the hapless widow survive this afflictive stroke. Her young and tender heart had received a shock which tended gradually to undermine her constitution; and her sun went down while it was yet day. Within a few short years after the death of her husband, the once blooming Maria was carried to the church-yard; and amidst the tears of those who had long sympathized in her sorrows, her beautiful body was laid in the same grave which had formerly been opened to receive the remains of her darling boy.

* * * * *

Years have rolled away since these melancholy events took place. Many winter storms and summer smiles have alternately visited the earth. Seed-time and harvest have successively come, and passed away. But there are some, who have not yet left the vale of tears, who remember these affecting incidents, and, with tearful eyes, recount them to their friends.

The Widow and her Son.

"And thou, forever fond, forever true,
Beneath whose smile the boy to manhood grew;
To sorrow gentle, and to error mild,
Shall death forever tear thee from thy child?"

MONTGOMERY.

"My dear Samuel, why do you stay out so late? Night after night have I sat up for you in this cheerless room, till my poor heart has been ready to break."

"You are too particular, mother; it is not very late."

"Not late, say you, when the clock is even now striking twelve? I tell you what, Samuel, those depraved young men with whom you have formed so close an intimacy, have rendered you callous to all good advice, and have blighted the expectations which I had fondly cherished of seeing you walk in the steps of your sainted father, now in glory. If you do

not renounce them, they will be your ruin, body and soul."

"Then you would deprive me of my only enjoyment, the society of a few friends, after laboring hard all the day?"

"Call you that enjoyment? To be seated on the ale-bench, surrounded by a number of wild, unthinking wretches, listening to the drunkard's song, or hearing the blessed name of your Creator blasphemed! What, is it enjoyment to spend your money at the public-house, while your poor, widowed mother is struggling with poverty at home, and sometimes compelled to deprive herself of bread in order to save out of her hard-earned pittance enough to pay her weekly rent? That enjoyment indeed!"

"What is enjoyment to one, mother, may not be so to another. Doctors, you know, differ."

"Great God! and is it come to this?" And the tears started into her eyes: then wiping the moisture from her spectacles, with which she had been reading the Bible, she continued,—

"Hear me, Samuel. When your father lay

on his dying bed,—that bed which I have so often watered with my tears,—just before the angel of death was commissioned to strike the blow which made your mother a widow,—that godly father beckoned you to approach him ; and, after his faltering lips had muttered a last and fervent prayer to Heaven for his wife and child, he said, ‘ Samuel, I am going home ! Be a good lad ; love the Lord ; and when I am laid in the grave, be kind to your mother !’ For three years you followed his advice, and I was happy. But for the last six months, since you have inclined your heart to pleasure and dissipation, I have been wretched. Do, my dear Samuel, forsake your evil ways, give up at once your evil companions, take the Bible for your guide, and peace will again take possession of this now desolate heart.”

“ Well, I wish to hear no more preaching. I am tired, and want to retire to rest.”

“ Have you forgotten, Samuel, that this blessed book,” pointing to the word of God, which lay open before her on the table, “ and which has been the only companion of my soli-

tary hours,—have you forgotten that it denounces a curse on those children who despise the counsel of a father, and condemn the advice of a mother?"

"I tell you, mother, I want no more preaching. I am old enough to judge for myself."

"And is it not the duty of a mother to teach her child the precepts of religion; and when she sees him going astray, to warn him of his danger? And this you reject! Remember, Samuel, the Bible says, 'He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly ——.'"

"Enough! To-morrow morning I leave for London. My purpose is fixed. I have already made arrangements; and two young men are going with me."

"Then go, and leave your aged mother to pine in secret over her rebellious child. And while pursuing your unhallowed course, think of the advice which you have spurned, and a mother's prayers which you have despised. Think of the withered hopes and blighted prospects which you have occasioned to her

who gave you birth. Think especially on that awful passage which your impatient spirit would not suffer me to finish: 'He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'"

Such was the conversation which passed between Mrs. Harris and her only son. The former had lost her husband about three years and a half. Though in humble circumstances, he was honest and industrious, and greatly respected by a large circle of friends. He had been a member of the Methodist Church in the town of C. for many years. His Christian deportment, which was uniformly consistent, added to an amiable and loving spirit, endeared him to the whole society. His spiritual enjoyments also were of the highest character. It is no wonder, therefore, that a life so holy, so devout, should terminate in a peaceful and triumphant death. Relying on the covenant mercies of God, through the merits of a crucified Saviour, he breathed his happy spirit into the arms of his Redeemer.

Mrs. Harris, who had also obtained a know-

ledge of salvation by the remission of sins, was deeply affected by this painful visitation. The loss of her partner, on whom she had doated with almost adoring fondness, preyed upon her spirits. Many weeks passed away before the dejection of her mind forsook her. At length she could say, even while lingering in the twilight near the grave of her husband, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

She had, however, one comfort left. Though the partner of her bosom was taken away, she had a son,—an only son. He had just completed his twentieth year, and had been always steady, industrious, and obedient. For more than twelve months he had been a teacher in the Sunday-school, and appeared happy while engaged in that labor of love; so that for three years from the time that death had visited their habitation, the widow and her son lived in the greatest harmony and comfort.

But now a fearful change had taken place, both in the spirit and pursuits of Samuel;

which at once destroyed the hopes and expectations of his mother. There were several loose characters residing in the neighborhood, who had recently imbibed the horrid principles of socialism, at that time industriously propagated by the notorious Owen. In an evil hour the unsuspecting youth suffered himself to be seduced into their society; and having spent several agreeable evenings in their company, he soon became a participator in their intemperate and licentious practices. From this time he seldom returned home till the hour of midnight. In vain did his mother remonstrate with him, day after day, on the dangerous course he was pursuing. Alas! her tears could not move him, her tender pleadings failed to affect him, and her maternal counsels were spurned and disregarded by him.

Her pecuniary embarrassments began also to perplex her. Formerly he threw into her lap the greater part of his weekly earnings: now those earnings were squandered in the public-house. She was therefore compelled,

with a feeble body, and a mind bowed down with sorrow, to labor for her own support.

Such was the state of things when the conversation which I have related, took place.

When Mrs. Harris arose the next morning, the sun was high in the heavens ; and as she opened the window of her little chamber, the soft breezes of the south fanned her feverish frame, for she had passed the night in restlessness and anxiety. As her humble dwelling was situated amidst a cluster of others, in the suburbs of the town, the window from which she was gazing commanded an extensive range of scenery, intermingling the beautiful and the sublime. The early summer had clothed the trees with foliage, and the fields with "living green." For many summers she had stood on the same spot, and gazed on the same prospect, when her heart was light and cheerful ; for as yet the voice of mourning was not heard in her dwelling, nor had the fear of adversity disturbed the serenity of her mind. But, on the present occasion, nature seemed to have lost her charms ; and the

eyes of the poor widow were filled with tears. She remembered that it was on a morning as lovely and beautiful, that the partner of her bosom was torn from her embraces. Alas! on *this* morning, too, her-son had already deserted her. This truth she soon discovered. She called him; but no answer was returned. She entered his apartment; but he was not there. Then her heart sunk within her.

The widow was on her knees, commending her rebellious son to the care and protection of Heaven, when the door was suddenly opened, and Samuel's master entered.

"Is your son at home?" said he.

"No!" she replied.

"Where is he?"

"I cannot tell; unless he has gone to London."

"And why do you think he has gone to London?"

"He told me last night, after I had been remonstrating with him respecting keeping late hours, that he intended going to London this morning."

“The wretch! He has robbed me of twenty pounds! I have only just discovered the theft. But I will immediately send in pursuit of him.”

He then left the house. For some moments the poor woman stood motionless; till at length a flood of tears brought a temporary relief.

It will be needless to recount the complicated sufferings she endured, the scenes of poverty through which she passed, and her struggles to procure the common necessities of life, during the next six months. As yet she had received no intelligence of her son. Her health had rapidly declined by anxiety and hard labor. The scanty pittance which she gained by taking in washing, barely enabled her to pay her rent, after having satisfied the cravings of hunger. But she never complained; and though her neighbors occasionally tendered their assistance, she invariably declined their proffered aid.

The winter had now set in with extreme rigor; and with it her physical debility daily

increased. On a dark and stormy evening, towards the close of the year, she was preparing to take home a large quantity of linen which she had been washing for a lady who resided at the farther end of the town. At the time, she had not a penny in the house; having expended all that she possessed in food and fuel. On this last fruit of her labor she depended to pay her weekly rent, which was now due. She feared, however, that the task of conveying it home would be too much for her diminished strength. But she did not long deliberate; and throwing over her shoulders an old shawl, she proceeded on her journey, frequently stopping on the way to rest her wearied limbs. The night was dark and cloudy, no friendly star glittered in the firmament; the wind was cold, very cold; the snow, which was already deep on the ground, continued to beat in large flakes in her face. In a state of great exhaustion, she arrived at the house, and, ascending the steps, she knocked at the door.

“Hard is the lot of the infirm and poor.”

Here she waited long and patiently. At length one of the servants opened the door.

"I have brought the washing," faintly murmured the widow.

"Very well," was the reply: "lay it down."

"It comes to five shillings and fourpence."

"Well, you must come to-morrow. Mistress has a party, and cannot be spoken to now."

"The door was then closed; and the aged woman essayed to retrace her steps homeward. Hope died within her, as she reflected that her last loaf of bread was gone, and she had no expectation of tasting food till she received the amount of her washing on the following day. Slowly and still more slowly did she walk through the drifted snow; quickly and still more quickly did her heart beat against her side; keener and keener blew the northern blast. She gathered her shawl closer around her shivering frame. Nature could bear no more. She clasped her hands together, and looking up to heaven, breathed a silent prayer to the widow's God. Then sinking on the

snow a lifeless corpse, her spirit passed into a world of bliss.

It is now time to return to Samuel. The sun was just sinking behind the western hills, when the coach arrived in the city. On alighting, he paused for a moment, lost in silent wonder, gazing alternately on the lofty buildings which his eyes encountered, and on the dense masses of people who were moving in all directions; when the two young men who had accompanied him urged him to proceed. After passing through a number of crowded streets, they entered a low tavern, in one of the narrow lanes in the vicinity of the Strand. Here, seated in a back parlor, they indulged themselves till a late hour in excessive drinking, and in talking over their anticipated enjoyments in this great city. Having paid the landlord the amount of his bill, they all retired to rest.

It was late on the following morning when Samuel awoke. He found that his companions had already risen. Supposing they had

gone to order breakfast, he hastily adjusted his clothes, and descended to the parlor; but he saw nothing of them. He inquired of the landlord whether he had seen them.

"Yes," said he; "they left together more than two hours since."

"Did they say when they should return?"

"No—they left without uttering a word."

A painful suspicion was now awakened in the mind of Samuel. Involuntarily putting his hands into his pockets, he found that his money was gone.

"O!" he cried, "I am robbed. These two villains have made me penniless."

"I must confess," coolly remarked the landlord, "that I did not like their appearance. There was too much whispering between them last night, while you were settling your account with me."

"O landlord, I am ruined! I am ruined!"

"You should keep out of such company, young man," the landlord laconically replied.

Samuel rushed out of the house, not knowing where to go, and wandered through the

streets of London for several hours, in the most dreadful state of excitement, when the cravings of hunger roused him to more sober reflection. Observing a pawnbroker's shop in Blackfriar's road, he determined at once to obtain a few shillings by pledging his great coat. Twelve shillings was the amount allowed; on receiving which he hurried to an eating-house. There he partook of a hearty meal, and sat for some time ruminating on his helpless condition.

In the evening he resolved to retrace his steps to the little inn where he had slept on the preceding night. This, with much difficulty, he found.

"Well, young man," said the landlord, "have you met with your comrades?"

"No."

"And my conviction is, you never will. Such sharpers seldom show their faces where they are likely to be detected."

"Can I sleep here to-night?"

"O yes; as many nights as you please, provided you pay for it. But have you no employment? What do you intend doing?"

"At present I have no employment. I came to London in quest of a situation."

"What is your business?"

"I am a book-binder."

"It is not unlikely that you may obtain a situation by applying to Mr. —, whose shop is round the corner. Several of his men come here every day to dine; and a few days since I gathered from their conversation that they were unusually busy."

"Thank you. I will call to-morrow morning,"

He did so; and obtained employment.

Unfortunately for Samuel, he found his fellow-workmen to be wild and dissipated. Having, therefore, no one of a serious character, whose example might prove a check to his irregular practices, he thoughtlessly participated in the follies and levities of his new associates. Occasionally, indeed; the thoughts of his widowed mother, and of the pious counsel which he had despised, would flash across his mind, even in the chambers of intemperance, and embitter the cup in which he en-

deavored to drown the remembrance of the past.

Thus week after week, and month after month passed away, without the occurrence of any extraordinary incident, till he had spent about six months in London. During that period he had not once written to his mother; for he was fearful that the knowledge of his residence might reach the ear of his late injured master.

One Sunday evening, when the weather was unusually cold, and the dense fogs rendered the air damp and oppressive, as he was returning to his lodgings in the neighborhood of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, he saw a number of persons flocking into the beautiful chapel in Great Queen-street. For a short time he stood at the door, hesitating whether to enter. The recollection of former years, when he habitually attended the house of God in company with his parents, induced him now to mingle with the congregation. The sermon that evening was founded on that important passage of Scripture, "Be sure your sin will find

you out;" the bare repetition of which smote heavily upon the heart of Samuel. Toward the conclusion of his discourse, the minister observed, "But I have told you this before. The same truths, the same warnings, the same threatenings, to which I am now calling your attention, have often sounded in your ears. Alas! they have never reached your hearts. And will you still refuse the word of exhortation?—still obstinately turn a deaf ear to the invitations of the gospel? Will you still reject the offers of salvation? Then listen to that awful threatening of Scripture, 'He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'"

Samuel could hear no more. He hastily left the chapel, and hurried to his lodgings, where he tried in vain to bury his thoughts in the oblivion of sleep. The horrors of a guilty conscience, and the dreadful apprehension of final retribution, banished slumber from his eyes.

The next morning he endeavored to con-

ceal from his companions the disturbed state of his mind; and when the dinner-hour arrived, went with them to the public-house. Having dined, cards were called for. Samuel joined in playing; and for a time appeared to take a greater interest than usual in the disgusting conversation of his fellow-workmen. But in spite of all his efforts, he could not shake off the depression of his spirits. Seeing a newspaper on the table, he took it up, and, in a desultory manner, glanced over a few paragraphs. At length, his eye rested upon a part of the paper which contained a list of coroner's inquests. Amongst them he found the name of his mother. The particulars of her being found in the snow were stated, and also that her death had been accelerated by exposure and want! He eagerly looked for the date of her death. She had been dead more than a week. He could read no more. The paper dropped from his hands; and, uttering a loud groan, he fell swooning on the floor.

The greatest consternation now prevailed in the room, and every countenance was pale

with fright. The landlord, who had been startled by the sudden noise, came into the parlor. "He is dying," they all exclaimed; "send for a surgeon." A medical person was immediately sent for, and the dying man was conveyed to the same bed on which he had slept when he first came to London. In a few minutes he awoke to a state of consciousness; and, looking round the room with a ghastly stare, he exclaimed, "He told me my sin would find me out. And my poor mother!—ah, she perished in the snow! Did she not tell me, 'He that being often reproved hardeneth his——'". Death broke off the remainder of the sentence; and when the surgeon arrived he was a corpse.

The Guernsey.

"O how my spring of life resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day :
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
And by-and-by a cloud takes all away !"

THE year 1832 will be long remembered by the inhabitants of Great Britain with melancholy interest. It was during that eventful year that the visitation of the Asiatic cholera produced the greatest alarm throughout the length and breadth of the land. Its ravages were indeed of the most fearful character. Young and old, rich and poor, indiscriminately sunk beneath its withering and desolating touch. At length, toward the close of the year, the ravages of this fatal disease were mercifully terminated by Him who alone could say to the Angel of the pestilence, "It is enough : stay now thine hand !"

About this time the following appeared in one of the London journals :—

"COUNCIL OFFICE, Nov. 21st, 1832.

"In consequence of the diminution of the number of the cases of cholera throughout Great Britain, the same will be published by the Central Board of Health, on Monday in each week only, in future.—So that the direful disease appears to have fled the country, after attacking 73,419 persons, old and young, and destroying 27,997 of its victims."

The Prophet Isaiah says, "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." And I have no doubt, that many who had been insensible to their spiritual danger, were awakened during this awful visitation to a sense of their lost condition, and in the eleventh hour to cry to God for mercy.

In a populous town, in one of the midland counties, there lived, at the period I have mentioned, a worthy man who kept an academy. He was a man of a highly cultivated mind, and well qualified to discharge the duties of his calling. His wife, who was remarkably delicate, had been under medical treatment for several years. The expenses attending this lengthened affliction sometimes occasioned pecuniary embarrassments;

but by industry and economy he was able to surmount his difficulties. He had a son, about the age of nineteen, and a daughter, about two years younger. He gave them an education which he hoped would enable them to gain a comfortable livelihood. In the month of July the cholera made its appearance, and with a fearful rapidity began to spread its baneful influence through the town. This excellent man became one of its earliest victims; and within the space of three days, his wife, who was also attacked, followed him to the grave. Their son was the next. On the day of his mother's interment, the youth was suddenly taken ill, and died on the following morning.

Thus, in one short week, this interesting family was reduced to a solitary member. That member was Ellen. She had now no father to counsel her; no mother to shield her; no brother to share her affections. She felt alone in the world. The pangs which she endured, while seated in the solitude of her chamber, may better be conceived than

described. Her gentle heart was breaking; and she was several times tempted to regret that she also had not been marked by the "destroying angel" as one of the youthful victims.

But these afflictive bereavements were overruled by a gracious Providence for the salvation of her soul. Spécial services were held in different places of worship, with a view to impress the minds of the inhabitants with the importance of a preparation for eternity. Hundreds who attended these meetings, many of them doubtless under the influence of fear and excitement, were awakened, and, there is reason to hope, were truly converted to God. It was during one of these services that Ellen was induced, with a penitent heart, to cast herself on the mercy of God, through faith in Christ; and she became a new creature.

There was a respectable lady residing in the town, of the name of Denham, who highly esteemed the father of Ellen for his superior talents and unblemished character. Seeing the destitute condition of the amiable girl,

she proposed receiving her into the family, as governess to her children. Ellen was too happy to decline the proposal; and with a thankful heart she at once entered on her new vocation. Her charge consisted of three children, all under the age of twelve. She found them to be docile and obedient; so that the labor of teaching them became a "delightful task." By her mistress she was treated with kindness and affability. But seldom is it the lot of even the prudent and the virtuous to enjoy, in this world of tribulation, a state of uninterrupted tranquillity. How often have the innocent been punished for the delinquencies of the guilty! And how often has the most spotless integrity been injured by the tongue of the slanderer! "Out of the heart," says our Lord, "proceedeth false witness." And it is a mournful proof of the degeneracy of human nature, that thousands who bear the Christian name, are ever envious at the prosperity of others. While they

* "Sicken at another's joy,
And hate the excellence they cannot reach,"

they will labor to cast a shadow over the merits, and study to darken the character, of their unsuspecting victims ! It was thus that the devoted Ellen was injured in the estimation of her only earthly friend ; and suddenly deprived, in the morning of life, of that unsullied reputation which it had been the ambition of her soul to maintain.

There were two female servants in the house, the elder of whom, who had been in the family for many years, was of a jealous disposition. When she found that a poor orphan was placed in a more honorable situation than herself, and that her mistress treated her with unremitting attention, she sought, by all the machinations that her envious mind could invent, to injure the unsuspecting girl. To some extent, she succeeded ; for when Ellen had spent about twelve months in the family, she observed, with much depression of mind, that her mistress was less kind to her, and, instead of addressing her as formerly in an affable spirit, her language was often discourteous.

On discovering that her nefarious plans had so far succeeded in weaning the affections of her mistress from the object of her own bitter aversion, the wily Sophia was emboldened to proceed to still greater lengths; trusting that she should eventually be the means of ejecting her from the house. On one occasion, Mrs. Denham was invited to spend the day at the house of a friend, who lived in the adjoining street. Soon after her departure, Sophia discovered on the table a massive gold pencil-case. While Ellen was engaged with her pupils in the school-room, she softly stole into the chamber of the governess, and, unlocking her box with a key that she had procured, deposited in it the pencil-case; then, locking it, she returned to her household duties.

It was late in the evening when Mrs. Denham returned, and nothing was said about the article. The next morning, she inquired of Sophia whether she had seen it. "Yes," replied the deceitful servant, "I saw the governess with it; and she took it up stairs last night, before you came home."

"O!" said the lady, "she is taking care of it for me. I shall be going into the school-room presently, and will ask her for it."

The hour which was to blight forever the earthly hopes of the accomplished orphan had now arrived, and the malignant triumph of the artful Sophia was about to be completed.

On entering the school-room, soon after the above conversation, Mrs. Denham asked for her pencil-case.

"I have not seen it, madam," replied Ellen.

"O yes!" said her mistress; "Sophia says she saw you take it up stairs last night."

"Sophia saw *me* take it up stairs?" answered the astonished girl: "I never saw it."

Sophia was then called up.

"Did you not tell me, that the governess had my gold pencil-case?" inquired Mrs. D.

"Yes, ma'am; she took it up stairs last night."

"You must be dreaming, Sophia," exclaimed Ellen; "on my oath I have not seen it."

"And on my oath, I saw you take it."

"Well, this is strange," said Mrs. D. "I

am sure I left it on the parlor table ; and one of you must have it."

"If you suspect *me*," said Sophia, in great perturbation of mind, "you may search my box."

"And as I am not only suspected, but *accused* of stealing it," said Ellen, "I *insist* on my box being searched."

With this she hurried to her chamber, and quickly returning with her box, opened it in the presence of her mistress and Sophia. The search was made, and the concealed treasure brought to light.

"Who has done this?" exclaimed the deeply astonished girl, bursting into tears. "I must have enemies in the house, who wish to ruin me. I declare, in the face of Heaven, that I never saw that pencil-case before!"

"I told you," said the deceitful servant, addressing her mistress, with an expression of malignant joy, "I told you she had it; and I hope you are now satisfied."

"I cannot but be satisfied," said her mistress; and, "bless me! here is also my silver thimble which I had lost for several weeks.

What have you to say for yourself, Miss ——? I have no more need of your services."

Overpowered by her feelings, the poor victim stood motionless as a statue. The delicate sensibility of her bosom completely prostrated her physical strength; and in the excess of anguish, she sunk swooning on the floor.

She was immediately taken to her apartment, and, proper restoratives being administered, she speedily revived; but only to a more vivid impression of the wretchedness of her condition. She felt that her character, which she had uniformly endeavoured to preserve inviolate, was impeached; and that the bright and sunny visions which had previously shed a soothing, tranquillizing influence over her young and susceptible heart, were about to be succeeded by gloom and desolation.

She had an aged aunt, who resided in a retired village, situated in the lovely vale of Evesham, and but a moderate distance from the city of Gloucester. As the only alternative, she resolved to seek an asylum under her humble roof; not doubting, that, by the bless-

ing of God, she should be able to obtain a livelihood by keeping a school.

On the following morning, having made the necessary arrangements for her departure, she wept an adieu to her mistress ; and, with tearful eyes, kissed the tender objects of her charge, whom she was destined never more to see. Just before stepping into the coach, which was to convey her far from the place of her nativity, she said to her mistress : “ Madam, you doubtless think me guilty of a crime which I have ever held in the utmost detestation—a crime at which my soul revolts. You think, also, that you have sufficient proofs of my guilt. But I am *innocent*. And that innocence is known to *Him* who has the sole prerogative of searching the heart. Be assured, the day will come when your judgment, no longer blinded by your present credulity, will be convinced, that these appearances of guilt, which I admit are strong against me, will be found to be fallacious ; and you will be compelled to acknowledge that you have thrust from your doors an innocent victim !”

"T was sad to gaze upon a brow so fair,
And see it traced with such a tale of woe,—
To think that one so young and beautiful
Was wasting to the grave."

THE spires of her native town began gradually to fade in the distance, as the coach in which Ellen was seated rolled rapidly along the turnpike-road; and the green fields, where she had so often rambled in innocent delight, during the period of her early childhood, had already receded from her view. The sun was high in the heavens, and poured his sultry beams on the parched and thirsty earth. The air was still—scarcely a breath disturbed the foliage of the neighboring woods. Beauty and magnificence characterized the scenery in all directions, inspiring the lover of nature with sensations of exquisite delight. Ellen gazed from the window of the vehicle on these opening scenes of splendor with feelings more of melancholy than of pleasure. For though she was an ardent admirer of the beauties of creation, as the works of Infinite Wisdom,

her mind at present was too much occupied with thoughts of the heavy calamity which had so recently befallen her, to feel the inspiration of the external loveliness by which she was surrounded. Her spirit was bowed down with a heavy weight of sorrow, and her bosom beat with tremulous emotions while reflecting on the future. Still her confidence in God was unshaken; and she was enabled calmly to resign her cares into his hand, convinced that in the time of trouble he would "hide her in his pavilion."

At length the coach arrived at the place of its destination, and Ellen was soon encircled in the embraces of her only earthly relative. After recounting to her aunt the story of her griefs, the aged woman endeavored to encourage the mourning orphan with the assurance that her heavenly Father would supply her wants; and, in the order of his providence, would doubtless establish her innocence of the crime of which she had been so unjustly accused. In a short time, through the influence of her aunt, and a few of her neighbors,

Ellen secured a number of pupils. The number gradually increased. Their progress in learning was rapid ; and the parents of the children were induced, on several occasions, to express their hearty approval of Ellen's mode of instruction.

Her amiable spirit, and superior mental accomplishments, had also secured her the esteem of the more respectable portion of the inhabitants, and she soon became a general favorite in the village. These flattering prospects, however, while they excited in her bosom expressions of gratitude, could not chase from her mind those gloomy forebodings which the constant recollection of the past continued to keep alive. That pleasing vivacity, for which she was so remarkable in her earlier years, had fled forever. The pallid cheek, the downcast eye, the half-suppressed heaving of the heart,—all these indicated the fearful change which adverse circumstances had produced. She would, indeed, have deemed it an act of impiety to have murmured at the dispensations of Providence, though those dis-

pensations were dark and mysterious; yet a settled pensiveness sat on her handsome features, and a feeling of dejection, which neither time nor change of scene could obliterate, continued to pervade her mind.

The clergyman of the parish was a pious, devoted man, and dispensed with faithfulness and fervency the word of life. Under his ministry the soul of Ellen was often blessed. On one occasion, when she had been in the village about six months, she attended divine worship as usual. It was a Sabbath morning. The discourse was founded on Psalm xxxvii. 5, 6, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day." No passage could be more suited to her case; and certainly none more calculated to strengthen her faith in God. Her attention was at once awakened; and she listened to the sermon with unusual interest, eagerly devouring the sacred truths which the minister so earnestly delivered. An extraordinary

elevation of soul seemed for a moment to "lift her above earth." The Divine Comforter diffused over her spirit such a hallowing influence, such "strong consolation," as she had never before experienced. An expression of heavenly hope spread over her beautiful countenance; the tears of joy involuntarily burst from her animated eyes; and, lifting up her eyes to heaven, she inwardly exclaimed, "Surely this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

The vicinity of the village in which she was now located, presented many attractive features. The scenery was sweetly picturesque; and in the direction of the Malvern hills, which were visible in the distance, peculiarly grand. In the intervals of school-hours, Ellen had been accustomed to ramble along the banks of the classic Avon, or over the gently rising hillocks, in order to sketch with her pencil some of the natural beauties which were presented to her eye. She was thus employed one lovely evening in autumn,

when two ladies, who appeared to be strangers in the neighborhood, slowly approached the spot where she was seated. The elder of them fixed her eyes upon Ellen with a steadfast scrutiny, which she almost regarded as rude. When they had proceeded a few yards, the same female whispered to her companion, sufficiently loud to be heard by Ellen, "I am sure she is the same person ; she was dismissed from Mrs. Denham's for dishonesty."

This incident, so unexpected, and so excruciating to her feelings, once more plunged the unhappy girl into the depths of despondency. Her heart began to beat with unwonted violence, and in the greatest mental agitation she hurried from the spot.

This unlooked-for occurrence tended materially to strengthen the malady which was secretly undermining her delicate constitution. Her languid eye and pallid cheek had, indeed, for some time presented evident indications of the insidious workings of disease ; and her widowed aunt, under whose roof she still resided, became painfully apprehensive

that the period of her dissolution was fast approaching.

Days and weeks rolled away, without producing the least favorable change. She found it impracticable any longer to attend to the duties of her school; and was at length compelled to be confined to her apartment. This affliction she sustained with exemplary patience. Supported by an inward consciousness of her innocence, and relying on the covenant mercies of God, she regarded her present sufferings as light and momentary; and with calm equanimity contemplated the hour of her dissolution as the dawning of a brighter day, when, freed from the trammels of mortality, she would rise to the life eternal, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

"It is almost inconceivable," says a modern writer, "how soon and how completely a finely-organized mind adapts itself to inevitable circumstances of reverse, which would bring a more blunted intellect to despair. The sense of enjoyment is proportioned to the vivacity

of mind ; and the thousand fresh springing sources of pleasure, open to the more susceptible among human beings, far outbalance the power of that morbid tone of suffering which bears down the dull." But it was not merely a *well-organized* mind, in the usual acceptance of the expression, that enabled the devoted Ellen to maintain an inflexible courage amidst the pangs and sufferings of sinking nature. She derived her chief support from her Heavenly Father ; not from the broken cisterns of human philosophy, but from the Fountain of living waters ; and in the strength of divine grace, she endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

Three months had now elapsed since she had relinquished the duties of her school. During that period her physical energies had considerably diminished, and her wasted frame was becoming more and more debilitated. Occasionally she was allowed, by her medical attendant, to sit up in the room, as a temporary relief from the monotony of a sick bed. One evening she sat later than usual ; for her

spirits, during the day, had partially revived. The clergyman called ; and a few pious friends, who had expressed the deepest interest in her welfare, were also present. Several hymns, appropriate to the occasion, were sung by the party, and the minister engaged in prayer. Though unable to join much in these devout exercises, the dying girl participated largely in their holy influence.

She was seated at the window of her chamber. It was a lovely evening in May. She gazed on the beautiful landscape, which was mellowed by the departing rays of the setting sun. The apple blossom, with its rich and varied colors, was peculiarly grateful to her sight ; and the early spring flowers, which shed a fragrant odor on the balmy air, sweetly regaled her senses. While gazing on these attractive objects, the wheels of a vehicle were heard moving slowly down the lane. In a few minutes it was in sight, and appeared to be a genteel carriage. It stopped in front of the cottage. A lady, respectably attired, immediately alighted, and, leaving the horses in

charge of a livery servant, proceeded towards the door. What was the astonishment of Ellen, when, as the lady advanced, she recognized her late employer, Mrs. Denham! A sudden tremor agitated her bosom, her cheek was suffused with an unnatural flush, and it was with difficulty that she retained her seat.

“Now,” said the minister, addressing the invalid, “the only anxiety which has so long disturbed your mind is about to be removed. I have no doubt the lady, convinced of the injustice of the charge preferred against you, has taken this journey to establish your innocence. You will now experience the accomplishment of the divine promise, to which your attention has been so often directed, ‘He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.’”

FROM the time of Ellen’s departure from her native town, no occurrence, involving any particular interest, appears to have taken place in the house of Mrs. Denham, till the close

of the ensuing winter. A new governess had been introduced into the family, as the successor of the persecuted orphan; and the circumstances which led to the dismissal of the latter were almost forgotten.

During the Christmas holidays, Sophia obtained permission to visit her parents, an aged couple, who resided in an adjoining village. This visit was protracted to a considerable period beyond the time prescribed for her return; and, on inquiry, it was found that Sophia had been taken ill. The weather having been unusually severe, she caught a cold, which subsequently settled on her chest; and she was now confined to her bed. Her disorder gathered strength; and after enduring the most acute sufferings, both mental and physical, she at length closed her eyes in death.

On the evening preceding her death, the wretched woman sent for Mrs. Denham, strongly urging her to visit her without delay, as she had something of importance to communicate; and that she could not die in

peace till the mournful truth was revealed. Mrs. Denham promptly obeyed the summons. On entering the chamber, she found her servant lying on the bed, gasping for breath. The change which had been produced in her countenance, and the extremely emaciated appearance of her sinking frame, caused Mrs. Denham involuntarily to shrink. The aged parents were also in the room, leaning over their dying daughter, in silent but unavailing grief.

"Sophia," said Mrs. Denham, "I am sorry to see you so ill; what can I do for you?"

"You are very kind, mistress," was the reply, "and I thank you for calling to see me. But I do not now need anything, for I shall soon return to my kindred dust. This poor, feeble body is rapidly failing, and I feel the hand of death is upon me! But my *soul*! ah! my poor soul! what will become of it? I dare not appear before an angry God; for I am unprepared to meet him. Think you there is mercy for so wretched a creature as I have been?"

"Yes, Sophia; Christ died for the chief of sinners; and he is willing to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him."

After a moment's pause, during which Sophia appeared to be greatly agitated, she fixed her languid eyes on her mistress, and, with a faltering voice, said, "I have something on my mind which I wish to disclose. It has made me wretched during the whole of my affliction; so that I have endured the heaviest, the bitterest reproaches of conscience, both by night and by day. But I cannot ——." Here she again paused. The violence of her emotions seemed almost to choke her. "I cannot," she at length resumed, "pain the minds of my beloved parents by disclosing in their presence what I wish to communicate to *you*. I wish to speak to you *alone*."

The aged couple instantly withdrew.

The night was bitterly cold; the wintry wind howled dismally through the leafless trees which grew at the back of the cottage, and the drifted snow lay embanked against the little window. Mrs. Denham shuddered

as she slowly approached the bed on which the guilty sufferer lay.

“And what is it, Sophia, that you wish to communicate to me?”

“O, it is concerning Miss Ellen, the late governess. You recollect, mistress, you dismissed her for the supposed crime of theft.”

“Why do you say *supposed* crime, Sophia? Was she not guilty?”

“No, ma’am; she was *innocent*!”

“But were not the articles found in her box?”

“Yes; but I deposited them there. I alone am guilty.”

“What upon earth could have induced you thus to ruin an innocent girl?”

“You may well ask such a question. I was jealous of her, because you treated her so kindly, as if she were your own daughter. I was also annoyed by her religious conversation, and her frequent exhortations to me to become pious. I thought myself as good as she was; indeed, I often told her so; and I felt determined to use every effort to prejudice

your mind against her. This accounts for the many artful reports which I communicated to you, but which I declare, on my dying bed, were false! I succeeded in obtaining a key by which I could open her box, and placed in it your silver thimble, hoping you would miss it; and I had resolved, in my own mind, to accuse Miss Ellen of having purloined it, in case you should inquire for it. I afterwards concealed the gold pencil-case for the same purpose, not doubting that the loss of this article would lead to some decisive steps for the removal of the governess. I need not tell you the extent to which this nefarious plan succeeded. You believed her guilty, and dismissed her. For some time I rejoiced that I was thus freed from an annoyance. Since my affliction, however, I have bitterly regretted my base conduct towards her. I would give kingdoms, if I possessed them, could I but see her once more, and entreat her forgiveness before I die."

During this recital, Mrs Denham appeared to be lost in dumb amazement. Her bosom

heaved with mingled emotions of pity and anger. "O, Sophia!" she exclaimed, "what have you done! By your wicked and deceptive conduct you have made me the instrument of cruelty to a helpless orphan, and perhaps blasted for life the prospects of an innocent girl! But I will not reproach you. You are dying, and need spiritual instruction. Let me entreat you to cast yourself on the mercy of God without delay. And I sincerely trust, before you are called hence, you will obtain forgiveness."

For several weeks after this affecting interview, Mrs. Denham made every inquiry as to the present abode of Ellen; but her efforts were unsuccessful, and she began to despair of ever again seeing her. She was, one morning, in the month of May, taking a solitary walk through a beautiful shrubbery adjoining her own grounds, when a young lady thus accosted her:—

"Mrs. Denham, I have seen your late governess: I mean the girl whom you dismissed about twelve months since, for dishonesty."

"Where did you see her? Pray tell me; for I have obtained the most satisfactory proofs of her innocence, and am anxious to clear her from the charge."

The young lady, who was one of the two visitors seen by Ellen, and mentioned in a preceding page, gave the necessary information; and within the space of a few hours, Mrs. Denham was on her way to —, in the vale of Evesham.

The sun was going down when she arrived in the village, and the fading lustre of his departing beams threw a purple glow over the summits of the Malvern hills. The spire of the little church, which was seen peering through a cluster of trees, was tipped with gold. The sky was beautifully serene, and the earth displayed its richest vernal flowers. Mrs. Denham had little difficulty in discovering the retreat of Ellen. But when, on being admitted into her chamber, she gazed on the faded form and death-like features of the interesting girl, she wept audibly. Her heart reproached her as being the agent, though

not the primary one, in producing this distressing change.

Scarcely had she recounted the particulars of her last interview with Sophia, and her dying confessions on that melancholy occasion, when the medical attendant came into the room. His stay was but short; and on his rising to depart, Mrs. Denham followed him to the door, and inquired whether, in his judgment, the removal of his fair patient to her own residence would be attended with danger.

"Yes," he said, "she is too weak. Had such a removal been adopted a few weeks earlier, the change might have been attended with beneficial results; but she is now too far gone. Indeed, she cannot survive many days. There is not the slightest hope of her recovery."

This afflictive intelligence greatly increased the anguish of the benevolent lady. It appeared to cut off the only hope which she had cherished, of rendering a service to one whom she had so unjustly banished from her house.

She resolved, however, not to leave her till death should occasion a separation. This resolution she scrupulously kept; watching alternately with her aunt, by the bed-side of the dying patient, till her happy spirit at length took its flight to heaven.

On the morning of the third day, symptoms of approaching death were apparent. The pulsations became fainter and slower; and a difficulty of breathing indicated that the hour of dissolution had arrived. Three persons were in the room,—her aunt, Mrs. Denham, and the pious minister. Not a word was uttered; no voice was heard. They all bent over the almost inanimate form, in trembling solicitude.

“My dear,” said the minister, breaking at length the solemn stillness, “I fear we are about to lose you. Is Christ still precious to your soul? Are you happy in God?”

“My soul magnifies the Lord,” she whispered, “and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.”

Then, directing her eyes to Mrs. Denham,

she said, "Raise me a little: perhaps it will relieve me."

She was accordingly raised in the bed. At that moment the sun darted through the casement his earliest beams, and faintly illuminated the chamber of death. The feathered choristers had begun their morning song, as if rejoicing in the returning light. The mists were gradually rising from the hills; and the face of nature was revealed in all its beauty and loveliness.

"O, how sweet is nature!" said the dying saint. "What a beautiful world! But it is a mere desert, a wilderness, compared to the heavenly kingdom which I shall soon behold; for there are flowers which shall never fade, and glories which shall never end.

"The promised land from Pisgah's top,
I now exult to see!
My hope is full (O glorious hope!)
Of immortality."

Her spirit, for a moment, seemed to be revived; a heavenly smile beamed from her countenance; and, with a soft voice, she re-

quested her friends to sing Pope's "Dying Christian to his Soul."

"I have often been affected," she said, "on hearing that beautiful ode; and should like to hear it once more." But on arriving at the second stanza,—

"Hark! they whisper: angels say,
'Sister spirit, come away,'"—

their feelings were overpowered, and there was a melancholy pause; during which Ellen dropped her head upon the pillow, and breathed her spirit into the arms of Jesus!

"She died in the bud of being, in the spring—
The time of flowers, and songs, and balmy air;
'Mid opening blossoms she was withering."

In a corner of the quiet church-yard, not far from the stately yew-tree whose spreading branches have afforded an agreeable shade during a hundred summers, a stone marks the spot where her mortal remains are deposited; and many a village maiden has paused to shed a tear over her early grave.

The Dishonest Apprentice.

"Shame, horror, ruin, threat on every side,
While in his bosom sounds a dreadful voice ;
It tells of talents misapplied, time lost,
Affection outraged,—every social tie
Despised and trampled on."

IN the "*Statistics of Metropolitan Crime*," it is stated, "There are in London 12,000 children under training to crime, 30,000 thieves, 6,000 receivers of stolen goods, 50,000 habitual drunkards, and 150,000 persons, of both sexes, leading an abandoned life."

What eye has not wept while glancing over this affecting account? What heart has not bled over this melancholy exhibition of wretchedness and demoralization? Doubtless the greater number of these youthful delinquents are the unhappy children of parents who have themselves been tutored in the school of vice, and whose immoral examples

have presented to their offspring, even at the most tender age, incentives to crime and dissipation.

“No mother’s care

Shielded their infant innocence with prayer ;

No father’s guardian hand their youth maintain’d,

Call’d forth their virtues, or from vice restrain’d.”

There are others, however, whose opening minds were early imbued with virtuous principles ; and whose hearts, before they became hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, were lured to the practice of piety, by the influence of parental counsel and example. Over these degraded sons and daughters, many a father’s heart has yearned in secret ; and many a pious mother, bleeding under the pangs which their disobedience has inflicted, has been brought down, even before her locks have been silvered by age, with sorrow to the grave.

The following narrative will furnish the reader with an affecting illustration of these remarks :—

In a populous village, about thirty miles

from London, there lived, some years since, a worthy man of the name of Williams. He was a widower, having lost his wife soon after she gave birth to her first child. The child, who was called Edward, was brought up under the fostering care of his affectionate father. At an early age he was sent to school; and as he grew in years his father became so much attached to him that his life seemed to be bound up in that of his son. Edward was a boy of quick parts, but was naturally fond of sport; and in the intervals of school-hours would amuse himself in all kinds of diversion, especially in climbing trees, in wantonly robbing the birds of their young, and in exciting the younger boys to fight, much to the annoyance of the neighbors.

At the age of fourteen he was taken from school; and, a few months afterwards, apprenticed to a respectable grocer in London. While journeying to his new situation, accompanied by his father, Edward appeared to feel but little regret on leaving his native village. His thoughts were upon the great

metropolis; and his imagination dwelt on the wonderful scenes he was about to visit, and the gay society in which he would shortly mingle. Far different were the feelings of his father. He was about to part with his only son; to commit him to the care of strangers; and in a city where temptations are so numerous. How much, he thought, his future welfare depended on the line of conduct he might pursue! And while his mind was occupied with these serious reflections, he felt for a moment a secret wish that he had sought for him a situation nearer his own residence, where he would be more immediately under his own eye. But it was too late; and the youth was accordingly bound on the day after their arrival in London. Previous to his return home, Mr. Williams gave his son some salutary advice, which he earnestly hoped would produce a favorable influence on his conduct and conversation.

“My son,” said he, “this may be regarded as the most important day of your life,—the turning point of your character. Your own

happiness, as well as mine, will greatly depend on the course you resolve, from this day, to pursue. I cannot therefore leave you in the hands of strangers, without giving you some wholesome advice. Be strictly *honest* in your new calling. Never claim anything that is not your own, nor possess yourself of anything, however trifling, that does not belong to you; for dishonesty in an apprentice is sure to be visited with consequences the most fearful. Strictly adhere to *truth*; for if you are once detected in uttering a falsehood, especially if it be to conceal a fault, your word will never afterwards be regarded,—you will forfeit forever the confidence of your employers. *Avoid evil company*; for by associating with the ungodly, thousands of young men have been brought to a dishonorable end. Remember the *Sabbath day*, to keep it holy. Begin and end each day with God. Frequently *read the Scriptures*; for the vital truths which they contain are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. By observing these in-

structions, my son, you will insure the favor and protection of God, and prove a blessing to your aged father; but if you slight them, if you contract evil habits, and resolve to follow a life of sensual pleasure, you will accelerate your own ruin, and bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Happy had it been for Edward had he followed the counsel of his affectionate parent! But the sequel of his adventurous career will show, that by *despising the law of his father*, the awful consequences of his disobedience, foretold by that father, were subsequently realized.

During the first two years of his apprenticeship, his conduct, though not free from some juvenile indiscretions, some trifling derelictions of duty, was, upon the whole, satisfactory to his employer. But, unfortunately, the latter was not a pious man; he never attended a place of worship, nor was the voice of prayer or of praise ever heard under his roof. He was strictly a *man of business*; and the sole object of his life was the acquisition

of wealth. Edward, therefore, was not placed in a soil where the seeds of early piety might spring up and favorably germinate; nor in a school where the instructions he had received in his tender years were likely to be matured. The consequence was, he generally spent his Sabbaths in rambling about the fields, or in taking excursions to some of the fashionable places in the vicinity of the metropolis. This mode of spending the Sabbath often brought him into the company of idle and profligate young men, who too fatally succeeded in leading the youthful victim into habits of intemperance and debauchery.

But these extravagant habits could not, of course, long be continued without considerable pecuniary sacrifices. He had frequently received supplies of pocket-money from his indulgent father, and occasionally small sums as presents from his master; but all this was insufficient to support his libertine propensities. Several times, when he fancied that no human eye was upon him, he contrived to rob the drawer; and with such secrecy, that

he began to flatter himself detection was impracticable. But the repeated successes which had attended these nefarious practices, served but to embolden the depraved youth in his course of dishonesty; and consequently to render his exposure and disgrace the more striking. It is thus that the god of this world often blinds the eyes of the children of disobedience in the early stages of crime, till, at length, the unsuspecting victims are overtaken by the hand of justice, and punished for crimes at which, in the commencement of their progress in vice, they would involuntarily have shuddered.

Edward had now served more than four years of his apprenticeship. No improvement in his conduct was yet evinced. No appearance of reformation could be traced in his deportment. Undaunted by the dreadful forebodings of the future, which ever and anon were produced in his mind by the invisible monitor, he continued to walk in the way of sin.

One Saturday evening his master sent him

to a person who resided in a distant part of the city, with the sum of three pounds, the amount of a bill, which was due for labor, and the payment of which had been earnestly requested. Edward, who was not aware of this urgency of the payment, resolved to appropriate the money to his own use; not doubting that within the space of another week he should be enabled, by pilfering small sums at different times from the till, to pay the amount. He accordingly forged the name of the person, and on his return home presented the counterfeit receipt to his master. The next day, being the Sabbath, he took an excursion to Gravesend, with several of his profligate companions, and spent the day in the greatest hilarity. Nor did he return in the evening till the greater part of his money was spent.

It was late the next morning when he rose, much debilitated in body, and greatly agitated in mind,—the necessary consequences of the previous day's debauchery. In the afternoon, fancying himself alone in the shop, he

was in the act of secreting in his pocket several shillings which he had just taken from the drawer, when his eye caught that of his master. "O!" exclaimed the latter, "I have at length caught you at your tricks. I have long suspected you. Now I have detected you in the very act."

It was in vain for Edward to plead innocence, or to urge excuses; and, bursting into tears, he fervently implored forgiveness, declaring, in the most peremptory terms, that it was the *first* time he had been guilty of such an offence.

"Whether it was the first time or not," was the reply, "I will take care that it shall be the *last*. Were it not for the respect I feel for your father, I would send you to prison without delay. However, I will write to him immediately, acquainting him with your conduct, and request him to take you home; for I will not have such a dishonest wretch in my house."

A member of the family was then called to fill his place behind the counter, and the

trembling culprit compelled to perform some menial employment in a corner of the shop. But how shall I describe his feelings under this sudden and unexpected change in his prospects? He saw that his character was gone; and that nothing but misery and ruin awaited him. In this excited state of mind he remained for some time, ruminating on the dark future; when, on turning round, he saw, standing before the counter, the person whose money he had detained, and whose signature he had counterfeited. He started from his seat in an agony of despair, and would have rushed out of the shop, had he not been prevented. A conversation, which continued for some time, took place between his master and the man. The receipt was produced by the former. The poor man appeared astounded; protested that the money had not been paid, and declared the receipt to be a forgery. At this juncture, Edward was unceremoniously conducted by his master into a room at the back of the house, and placed in the custody of one of the workmen.

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Mr. Williams at length arrived. A statement of the whole affair was laid before him. Edward at once acknowledged the fact of having written a false receipt; and confessed that he had on many former occasions robbed his master. While listening to these distressing details, the wretched parent groaned in spirit; his heart was almost broken; and while the tears flowed copiously down his aged cheeks, he imploringly exclaimed, "Do not send my son to prison; he is my only child. I know he has deserved it; but spare the feelings of an old man. Let me take him to his early home, where he will be no longer exposed to the same temptations to evil. The recollection of his present alarming position, may lead him to be more circumspect in his conduct. And I trust, by having him under my own eye, he will yet, by the blessing of God, be enabled to regain that uprightness of character which he has now unhappily forfeited."

To this request the shopkeeper agreed, on condition that the money which the aban-

done youth acknowledged to have stolen was refunded. A check was immediately given for the amount; and the father and son together left the house, purposing to return by the first coach to their native village.

They passed through several streets in silence. Not a word was spoken by either. When approaching the vicinity of the coach-office, in the neighborhood of Cheapside, the father was struck with astonishment that Edward was no longer by his side. He had disappeared among the dense crowd of passengers, and could not be found. This was a trial which the afflicted parent had not contemplated; and with a bleeding heart he was compelled once more to return to his solitary habitation.

The precipitous flight of Edward from his father did not originate from the impulse of the moment. The resolution was formed in the instant that he found himself at liberty. London presented such attractions to his vitiated mind as he could not forego; and such alluring incentives to pleasure, as he found it

impossible to resist. His remembrance of the tameness of a country life, and the prospect of again encountering its monotonous routine, were insupportable to him; and he determined, at all hazards, to remain in the metropolis.

For several days he wandered about the city, in quest of a situation in his own business; but not being able to give a satisfactory account of himself to the parties on whom he called, his applications were, of course, unsuccessful. Finding that his hopes were thus frustrated, he was at length thankful to engage himself as porter in a mercantile warehouse. But, owing to the drudgery of the employment, and the inadequacy of his salary to support his extravagant mode of living, he soon became disgusted with his situation, and eventually adopted the dreadful resolution of subsisting on the wages of dishonesty. It was a fearful expedient; but his intemperate habits rapidly gained such a strong hold of his depraved inclination, that he found it impossible to shake them off. He

would often mingle with the dense crowds, who assembled at the doors of the Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres, when some popular performer was expected; and while the deluded votaries of pleasure were struggling for admittance into those synagogues of Satan, he would pillage their pockets of whatever they contained. By this means he sometimes secured considerable sums of money. Flushed with the success of his new enterprise, he soon became an adept in the science of pocket-picking. With his ill-gotten spoil he launched into the very extreme of luxurious living. Giving up the reins to his passions and his lusts, he rushed without restraint into every scene of folly with an eagerness that was truly astonishing. But this determined course of iniquity could not continue long; it presented bounds beyond which he could not pass. In certain localities he was already suspected; and the police were instructed to watch his movements.

One day, while looking through the window of an elegant shop in the Strand, he observed

a respectable lady in the act of putting into her purse some sovereigns which she had received in change. The purse was placed in a small reticule, which she held in her hand; and she left the shop. This he considered too *golden* an opportunity to be lost, and he followed her for a short distance, when, on turning the corner of Wellington-street, leading to Waterloo-bridge, he seized the reticule, and with the swiftness of an arrow, fled with his booty to a public-house in Drury-lane, where he had been accustomed to spend his evenings. While engaged in ascertaining the amount of his treasure, two policemen entered the room, and claimed him as their prisoner. Before they could secure him, he seized a poker, and dealt so violent a blow on the head of one of the men, that he fell bleeding on the floor; and while the other appeared paralyzed by this unexpected fray, Edward availed himself of the confusion of the moment to make his escape. With the rapidity of lightning, he ran through several streets, till he at length arrived in Lad-lane. Seeing

a coach about starting for his native village, he instantly paid the fare, and in a short time beheld in the distance the dome of St. Paul's receding from his view.

The night was far advanced when the coach arrived at its destination. Still trembling with emotion from the unexpected discovery of his late transaction, Edward bent his steps towards his father's cottage. The moon shone brightly in the heavens, and threw her silvery rays over the old gray tower of the church. All was silent, save the mellow notes of the nightingale, falling melodiously on the ear of night; forming a striking contrast to the noise and din of the mighty city which he had so recently left. But his mind was too much occupied by reflecting on the occurrences of the day, to regard the melting strains. As he passed along, he appeared involuntarily to start at the sound of his own footsteps, and several times looked back, to be satisfied that the officers of justice were not at his heels.

On reaching the paternal dwelling, he found

that the front door was fastened. Silently he crept to the back of the house, and through the window beheld his aged father seated at the table, reading the Scriptures: his countenance was pale,—ghastly pale,—and sadness had furrowed those manly cheeks, which, in former years, had been ruddy with the glow of health. While Edward stood gazing on the altered visage of his parent, the heart of the rebellious son, whose conduct had been the sole occasion of that painful change, was for a moment softened; the agonies of remorse for a moment subdued his turbulent spirit; and, opening the door of the cottage with a trembling hand, he fell on his father's neck.

“Forgive me!” he cried; “and I will yet be a dutiful son: my future behavior shall prove the sincerity of my sorrow for the past.”

It was some time before the venerable man recovered from the extreme agitation which this sudden and unexpected visit had occasioned. At length, having acquired a moderate degree of calmness, he began to interro-

gate the youth as to the course he had been recently pursuing, and the reason of his return home.

"Since I left you so abruptly," he replied, "I have been in an excellent situation. I was fortunate enough to procure it on the day when we separated in London. By strictly fulfilling the duties of my office, I have wanted for nothing. The reason of my not returning with you, originated in my dislike to the country. London presented attractions which I could not withstand."

"But, my son, why did you not write to me, if it had been for no other purpose than to relieve my mind, and to remove those feelings of dark suspense which have made me wretched ever since that unhappy day?"

To this question, so natural, Edward scarcely knew how to reply. He was evidently embarrassed. "I wished, father," he stammered, "to ascertain whether the situation was likely to be permanent. I had also intended to pay you a visit, as soon as an opportunity offered. Such an opportunity has now presented itself;

and I purpose staying with you for several days."

Soon after this conversation the father and son retired to rest.

At an early hour the next morning, they were both seated at the breakfast-table. Mr. Williams endeavored to improve the occasion, by exhibiting to his son the dangers attending a sinful course of life; and in guarding him against those practices which had almost destroyed his happiness forever. Edward listened with apparent attention to the counsel of his father; and the latter was encouraged to hope that his advice would no longer be disregarded.

"Now, my son," he exclaimed, when breakfast was over, "I will read a chapter in the Bible, and then pray for the divine blessing. You know this has always been my custom."

The Bible was placed on the table; and while the pious old man was reading a portion of the word of life, the door of the cottage was suddenly opened, and two police officers unceremoniously entered.

"You shall not escape this time, my lad," cried one of them, seizing Edward by the collar; "there is a carriage waiting to convey you back to London. Resistance will now be in vain."

"What is the meaning of this?" inquired Mr. Williams, rising from his seat in the greatest perturbation; "you must have made some mistake."

"No mistake at all," was the reply. "I know the youth well. He managed to escape from my custody yesterday; but I inquired of different persons, who had seen him pass, and by the information I received, was enabled to trace the route which he had taken; and on inquiry at the coach-office in Lad-lane, I found he had taken coach for this village."

"But surely you *must* be mistaken. My son cannot be guilty of any crime against the laws."

"If he is your son, he is guilty of theft, and, it is very probable, of *murder* too; for the officer whom he struck with such violence, is not expected to recover. So come along."

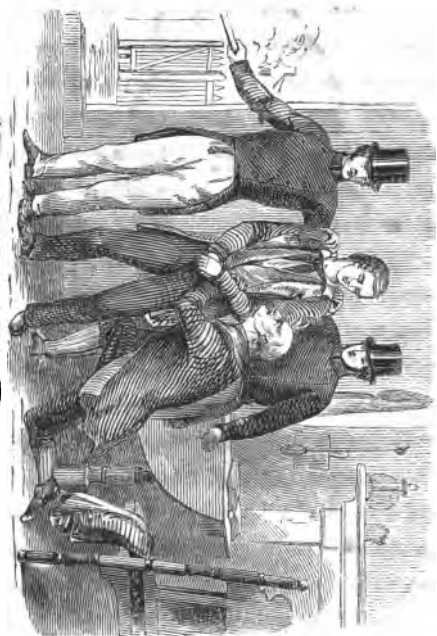
And he was in the act of securing the trembling youth, who now saw the utter futility of attempting any resistance, when the agitated parent, unable to restrain his feelings, exclaimed in a tone of hopeless anguish, "But you shall not tear him from me: he is my son,—my only child! What proof have you that he is the guilty party of whom you are sent in pursuit?"

Then, making a desperate effort, he vainly essayed to sever his son from the custody of the men.

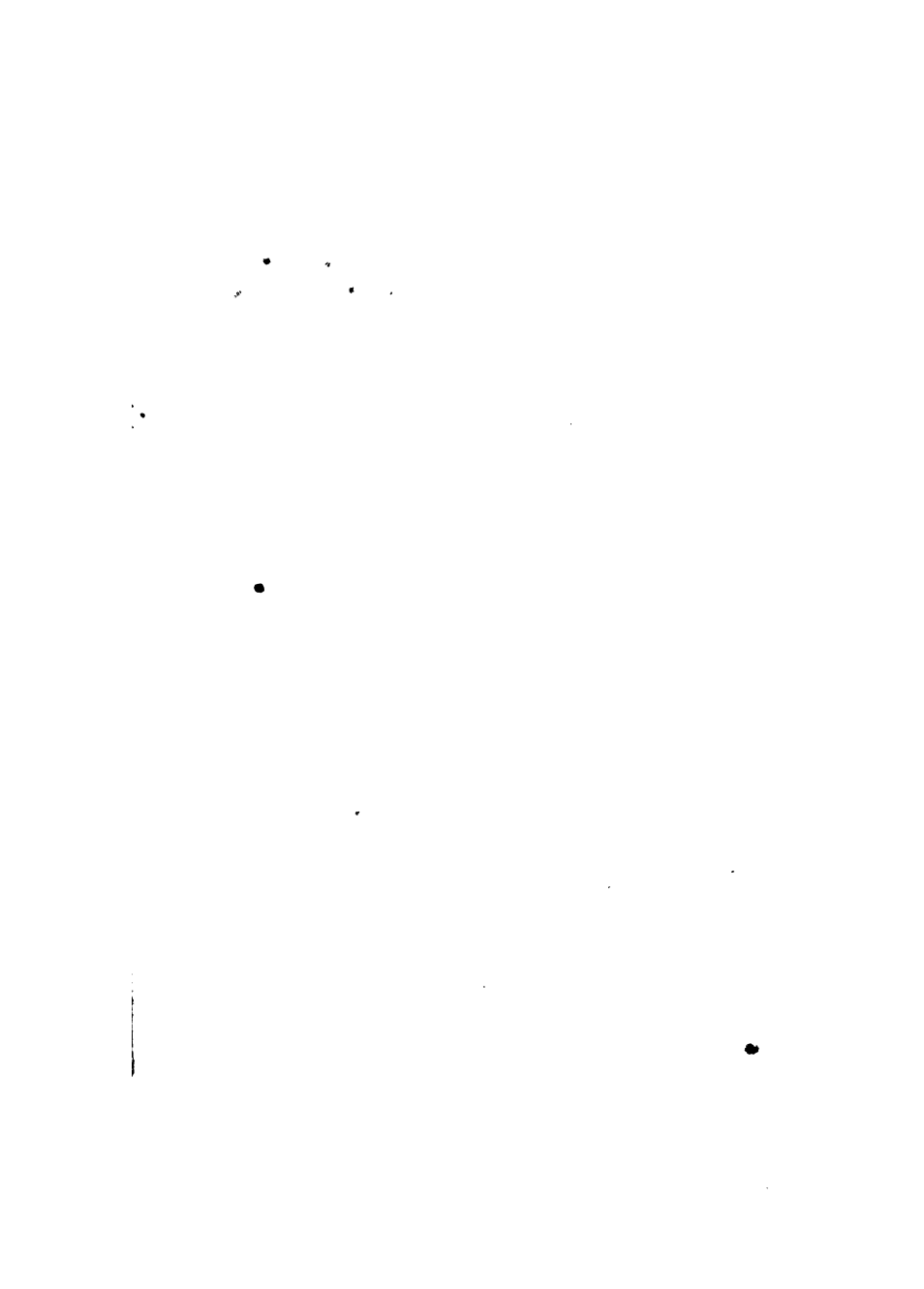
"We pity you," they replied, still retaining their charge; "but we must do our duty."

"Then stay one moment; I will accompany my son to London, and know his fate."

By this time a number of persons, who had seen the policemen enter the cottage, and suspected that some painful calamity had befallen their respected neighbor, began to assemble around the door. On learning the distressing particulars, the general sentiment produced in their minds was that of commiseration. Mr. Williams had ever lived in their



EDWARD ARRESTED AT HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.



affections; and by his amiable disposition, had for a long time entwined himself around the tenderest feelings of their hearts. And when they now beheld him in the utter hopelessness of grief, an expression of the deepest sympathy simultaneously burst from every bosom. There was not an eye in the village that was not suffused with tears.

"Come," said the policemen jointly; "it is idle to delay; we must proceed."


Mr. Williams now gave his house in charge to one of the neighbors, till his return; and, accompanied by his son and the unfeeling officers, slowly moved across the village green. Brightly shone the sun on that melancholy morning; and sweetly sang the lark, as he mounted towards the sky. The lilac and the laburnum vied with each other in displaying the beauties of their vernal bloom. The air was impregnated with the odor of ten thousand flowers; and the surrounding landscape, on which the eye of many a traveler had gazed with enthusiastic admiration, appeared lovelier than ever. But all these natural

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beauties,—all these exquisitely attractive objects, presented no charms to the eyes of Edward and his sire. To them all appeared a dreary, universal blank. The mind of the former was filled with forebodings of the awful fate that awaited him ; and the spirit of the latter was bowed down by an accumulated weight of sorrow, which the misconduct of his child had so deceptively heaped upon him.

In a few minutes they came in sight of the village inn, where the vehicle was waiting. The wretchedness of poor Mr. Williams had now reached its climax. His quivering lips, his incoherent expressions, and the wild glance of his eye, betrayed the desolation of his soul. He several times paused, that he might gasp for breath. It was too evident his heart was broken.

Unable any longer to maintain this unequal conflict, he sunk to the earth ; and, looking upward, breathed a silent prayer for the conversion of his child. Several of the neighbors hastened to his assistance ; but it was too late, his spirit had already taken its flight.




The soul of Edward was melted ; he threw himself on the body of his father, and kissed his clay-cold lips. There he lay for some minutes ; while the melancholy band of spectators filled the air with their cries and bursting sobs. The corpse of Mr. Williams was at length removed, and subsequently laid by the side of his wife in the quiet church-yard. Edward was taken to London to undergo his trial. The policeman whom he had assaulted gradually recovered his strength ; but the violence of the blow which had been inflicted, had so far injured his brain as to induce a permanent imbecility of mind, which rendered him incapable of sustaining any responsible situation. The theft was clearly proved ; and the assault being considered by the jury as one of an aggravated character, the dishonest apprentice, in the very morning of his existence, was sentenced to transportation for life.

The Pious Apprentice.

"Of all the sorrows that attend mankind,
With patience bear the lot to thee assign'd ;
Nor think it *chance*, nor murmur at the load ;
For know what man calls fortune is from God."

AT the close of a fine autumnal day, in the month of October, a poor widow, accompanied by her little son, a boy about the age of eleven years, was bending her feeble steps towards her comfortless home, which was situated in a small village, near the Kentish coast. She had been occupied during the preceding month in hop-picking; an employment which is eagerly embraced at this season of the year, especially by the poor, on account of the "golden harvest" which they anticipate reaping from this periodical labor. Thousands of persons, including men, women, and children, may be seen in the numerous plantations, pursuing this humble calling, both in Kent, and in the



neighboring county of Sussex. The widow had on this day received the remuneration of her own and her son's services, and was now returning to her lonely cottage. She had already walked more than seven miles; but being remarkably delicate in health, and having exerted herself in her recent employment beyond what her physical strength was adequate to perform, it is no wonder that the journey which she had undertaken, proved too much for her almost exhausted powers. Still she proceeded along the narrow lanes and well-known field-paths, taking the nearest direction, till the sun had sunk below the horizon, and daylight on its last purple cloud was lingering in the west. The adjacent country appeared beautiful, even in the dim twilight; but the growing faintness of her spirits rendered the poor widow insensible to the charms of an autumnal evening.

"Mother," said the little boy, anxiously gazing on her face, "are you ill? You look so pale."

"I am tired, Henry; very tired," she re-

plied: "let us rest awhile on this bank; perhaps I shall soon be better."

They sat together on the cold, damp grass, for about ten minutes, without uttering a word. "Are you better now?" Henry at length inquired, while the tears were moistening his cheeks.

"No, my dear," was the reply, "I feel very ill; and we are yet five miles from home."

At this moment, the moon, which had already climbed high in the heavens, emerged from behind a dark cloud, and threw its mellow light on the face of the widow, disclosing a deathly paleness. Henry sickened at the sight; his little heart began to beat, his lips quivered, and fearing that his only parent was about to be taken from him, he involuntarily sunk on his knees, and breathed, amidst the silence of the night, a hasty, fervent prayer to Heaven for his mother's recovery; for Henry had been taught from a child the importance of prayer, and been early instructed in the principles of religion. Though poverty had attended him from his birth, he was never

heard to murmur at his lot. In the school of adversity he had learned the salutary lesson of Christian resignation, and was enabled calmly to submit to the will of his heavenly Father.

When he had finished his prayer, he ran to a lone farm-house, which stood at the distance of about a stone's throw from the road-side. Having gained admittance, he urged some of its inmates to accompany him to the spot where he had left his afflicted mother. The apparent distress of the boy, and the earnestness with which he implored their assistance, induced the farmer and his wife to go with him. They found the poor woman just recovering from a fainting fit, into which she had fallen during her son's temporary absence. The farmer conducted her to his house; and under his hospitable roof, the widow and her son were accommodated for the night. The next morning, being much recovered, she proceeded on her journey; but on arriving at home, found herself incapable of resuming her occupation as a semstress, in which capacity she

had gained a scanty subsistence since the death of her husband. Disease had made rapid advances on her constitution, and she was now compelled to keep her bed. Medical aid was procured, and as she was much respected in the village, every attention was paid to her comfort by the sympathizing neighbors. Her affliction was severe; but it was borne with exemplary patience. The consolations of religion enabled her to triumph over bodily pain; and a sick room became to her sanctified spirit the antechamber of heaven. Notwithstanding the skill of her medical attendant, she lingered but for a few weeks; and then, with a dying prayer for the divine blessing upon her orphan child, her soul escaped to glory.

I will not attempt to describe the anguish which lacerated the bosom of Henry, when he found himself to be an *orphan boy*; without friends, without a home, and destitute of the means of support. But his confidence in God did not forsake him. Though clouds and darkness were round about him, the eye of his

faith rested on the divine promises, for he knew in whom he had believed. Though his earthly prospects were dim and obscure, though poverty, with all its attendant privations, stared him in the face, he was determined in this, the season of his extremity, calmly to trust in Him who feedeth the young ravens when they cry.

Within the space of a month after the remains of his widowed mother had been committed to the dust, he succeeded in obtaining a situation in a retail shop, in the town of Dover. In this situation he labored with unwearied diligence, but was treated by his unfeeling master with the greatest severity. He often wept in secret, but never complained of the hardships which he had constantly to endure. For a long time attempts were even made to deprive him of the privileges of the Sabbath, with a view to prevent his attending the house of God ; for his master was an unbeliever, and had never been accustomed to attend a place of worship. These attempts, however, were unavailing ; for the pious pr-

phan declared his determination rather to perish in the streets, than violate the sanctity of that holy day. This determination only tended to irritate the warm temper of his unreasonable master, and materially to augment the hardships of the unhappy youth. But though the mind of the latter was occasionally cast down by these unmerited persecutions, it retained its wonted vigor. The horizon of his earthly hopes was becoming more and more gloomy, and his future prospects were dark and portentous; but in the multitude of his thoughts within him, he was divinely supported, and the sunshine of Heaven beamed sweetly upon his soul.

He had now fulfilled the duties of his situation for upwards of two years, when a circumstance occurred, which, though it appeared to cut off his expectations, was overruled by a gracious Providence for the comfort of his future years. There was a revival of the work of God in the town; and, in consequence, the meetings for prayer on the Sunday evenings were continued to a later hour

than usual. Henry, who felt deeply interested in this revival, ventured to stay at one of these meetings till ten o'clock. On his return home, he was accosted by his master in the most brutal manner, and addressed in language the most blasphemous and indecent. Henry attempted to explain, but his arguments were disregarded. "And now," exclaimed the angry man, "since you have dared to trample on the rules of my house, and to insult me with your Methodistical cant, you may go about your business."

The door was then opened, and the uncomplaining youth thrust into the street.

This sudden and unexpected event proved a source of painful anxiety to Henry. He wandered along the beach, in the greatest mental distraction. He felt himself alone in the world. He had no friend to whom he could disclose the sorrow of his bosom; no protector to whom he could look with confidence to shield him from impending danger. He gazed upon the tranquil sea. Its calm, unruffled bosom reflected the silvery rays of

the full-orbed moon. The lights on the French coast, glimmering from the cliffs near Calais, were faintly seen in the distance. No sound was heard save the murmur of the receding tide, or the soft splash of the oars, belonging to some pleasure-boat, urging its course to the pebbly shore. "O that my poor mother were yet alive!" he muttered to himself: "I should not then be destitute of a protector. But perhaps she now sees me, and is at this moment watching my steps."

This thought involuntarily led him to retrace his steps to the place of his nativity. The walk was long and fatiguing; but the beauty of the night, the lovely appearance of the moon, riding in cloudless majesty, and the soothing notes of the nightingale, which issued from the neighboring woods, tended greatly to beguile the journey; and about an hour after midnight, he found himself in the church-yard of his native village, and resting on his mother's grave. The scenes of his early life came vividly to his remembrance. His soul was for a moment melted; the tears

gushed from his eyes, and he threw himself on the cold turf.

"Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,"

soon rendered him insensible to every surrounding object ; and when he awoke from his slumbers, the sun was high in the east, tipping the lofty hills with his golden rays.

Refreshed in body and in mind, he offered a prayer to Heaven for divine direction ; and leaving the church-yard, he directed his steps to the house of the medical man who had so kindly assisted his mother in her last illness.

The surgeon, who was a benevolent man, wept as the youthful outcast recounted the story of his griefs ; and promised to do something for him. Nor was he unmindful of his promise ; for the next day he procured for him a situation in a respectable establishment in the town of Chatham. His new employer was a pious man, and possessed a humane disposition. The labor was also comparatively light ; so that Henry soon felt himself at home in the situation in which he was now

providentially placed, and conducted himself with such propriety, that at the expiration of six weeks his master had him bound as an apprentice. His progress in the business was rapid; his moral deportment was also uniformly consistent; and the sweetness of his disposition endeared him to all with whom he had become acquainted. Thus the Lord smiled upon him; and as he continued to receive from his heavenly Father fresh manifestations of the divine regard, his gratitude kept pace with his mercies, and his early piety began to assume a more elevated character.

It will be needless to dwell longer on this happy period of his life: his years of servitude appeared to glide away with "down upon their wings." At length the term of his apprenticeship expired; and his excellent employer, who had long been sensible of the value of his services, at once took him into partnership, and allowed him an equal share of the profits of his business.

For some time previously, Henry had cher-

ished a warm attachment to his daughter, a young and accomplished female, of exemplary piety. This attachment he had sufficient reason to know was reciprocal. The consent of the father to a matrimonial alliance was subsequently obtained, and the affectionate pair were shortly afterwards united in marriage.

For many years they lived together in the greatest harmony and peace; happy in themselves, and much beloved by a large circle of friends. No untoward circumstance occurred to disturb their conjugal felicity; and in the closing scene of life, having finished their earthly course, they were enabled to look with confidence for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Thus this amiable youth, by his industrious habits, and an unshaken trust in the promises of God, was raised from the lowest walks of life to a position in society which secured him the respect of the rich and the honorable. His early piety enabled him to struggle with the nipping blasts of poverty without a murmur; and to bear reproach and persecution

with a calm equanimity. And the remembrance of the holy precepts which had been instilled into his bosom in the earliest ages of his existence, under the influence of divine grace, rendered his heart impregnable to the hateful passion of pride, when the beams of prosperity shone brightly upon his path.

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S u n n e t .

THE FUNERAL AT SEA.

There lay the youthful bride, with hands upraised
To Heaven, in silent, undissembled prayer ;
Her weeping spouse hung o'er her in despair ;
The tear-drops dimm'd his eyes, which fondly gazed
On her pale features ; then, without a groan,
Her spotless spirit fled to God and to his throne.

Her pallid corpse, still beautiful in death,
Was lower'd into the deep to perish there ;
The foaming surges bore the lifeless clay,
And howl'd a requiem o'er her watery bier.

The scene is over—and that fatal day
Has gone forever ! but to fancy's eye,
The past returns, and many a heart will sigh,
To learn the fate of one, so early snatch'd away.

A Visit to Canterbury Cathedral.

"Beneath this sky-like dome have pray'd
The heroes of the stormy ages;
And here their noble dust is laid,
Commingle with the saints' and sages'."

Who has not heard of Canterbury Cathedral, with its storied windows, dim with the solemn tints of sacred emblazonry; and its beautiful chapels, rich with the sculptured effigies of the mighty dead? It is, indeed, a noble structure, a splendid monument of the olden time. It was the place of interment for many of our kings, princes, cardinals, and bishops. Here are the tombs of Henry the Fourth and his queen; Edward the Black Prince; Cardinals Châtillon and Pole; Archbishops Courtney, Chichele, Bourchier, Walter, Reynolds, Kemp, Stratford, and Sudbury; with many others of less celebrity.

Whether we consider the pious zeal which prompted the erection of this magnificent

fabric, the princely munificence by which it was endowed, or the beauty of its architectural embellishments, there is a peculiar feeling of reverence, an undefinable sentiment of awe, which involuntarily arises in the mind, even on our entrance into the building, and which leaves us not on our departure.

The first visit which I paid to this celebrated place, was in the autumn of 18—. I did not, however, travel at railway speed, propelled by locomotive power; for the steam of the South-Eastern Railway was not then up. Nor did I proceed in the equestrian style of the jovial monk, who was one of the twenty-nine "sundry folks," mentioned by Chaucer in his "Canterbury Tales," who were bent on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas à Becket,—

"And when he rode, men might his bridle hear
Gingling in a whistling wind so clear,
And eke as loud as doth the chapel-bell."

At the pleasant town of Ashford, I took my seat in an omnibus, from the window of which I had an opportunity of surveying the

exquisitely fine scenery which in all directions meets the eye in this delightful county. My company in the vehicle consisted of an aged gentleman in the garb of a Friend, a young man, of a lively disposition, and an interesting female, "clad in sable mourning," about the age of thirty. We were all strangers to each other; but finding they were going to Canterbury, I made some inquiries respecting the city, its principal attractions, &c. The young man spoke in glowing terms of Danejohn, its conical mount, said to have been thrown up by the Danes in the siege of the city, about the year 1011; and of the beautiful walks and shrubberies, which form a delightful promenade for the inhabitants, especially during the sunny days of summer. While listening to this animated description, I observed the female suddenly turn pale. Her mind was evidently affected by some painful retrospection. The aged gentleman inquired if she were ill. She replied in the negative. "But," she said, "I never think of that place, or hear it mentioned, without feel-

ing a peculiar dejection of spirits ; and when I relate to you the cause, you will not be surprised. I once loved to stroll along the walks of Danejohn, and admired the beauties of the spot as much as the gentleman who has just been describing them. But one occurrence, the remembrance of which will follow me to the grave, has deprived the place of every attraction."

She then proceeded to relate the following particulars. Her child, when only twelve months old, was taken by the servant to Danejohn, where she had many times previously taken it, for the benefit of the air. On this occasion she stayed longer than usual ; and when she at length returned, the child appeared very ill : there was something in its appearance that excited considerable alarm in the bosom of the anxious mother. The servant was questioned, but no satisfactory answer could be gathered from her : her answers were evasive. A medical man was called in, and, after examining the infant, declared his opinion that the child must have

had a violent fall, as there was a severe contusion of the brain. The servant was again questioned, and now confessed the mournful truth. While standing near the railings on the summit of the mount, her foot slipped, and the child fell out of her arms; nor could she rescue it till it had reached the level.

"The child is still living," said the unhappy mother, "but has been an idiot ever since."

A silence for some moments succeeded the relation of this affecting occurrence; and I am sure the sympathies of the passengers were awakened towards the afflicted mother.

Having arrived within a short distance of Canterbury, the venerable cathedral burst upon our view. The central tower, which is two hundred and thirty-five feet in height, with its parapet and pinnacles, had an imposing effect. The surrounding hills, covered with verdure, the ruins of St. Augustine's monastery, the spires of the different churches, and the numerous hop-gardens in the vicinity, presented an appearance highly picturesque.

But these objects have been so often described; that I need not dwell upon them.

On leaving the omnibus, I repaired at once to the cathedral. Entering at Christ Church gate into the body of the church, my attention became at once fixed. No workmanship of man could be more imposing. My eye could but dimly trace its vast proportions by the light which was admitted through the gorgeously painted windows. The clustered pillars, the groined and arched magnificence of the roof, at the height of eighty feet, and the echoing aisles, leading to the flight of steps which conduct the visitor to the choir, produced in my mind the most solemn emotions.

It was at the altar of St. Benedict, in this cathedral, that the celebrated Thomas à Becket was murdered. This event took place on the 29th of December, in the year 1171. It is well known that Henry the Second was greatly annoyed by this ambitious prelate. For some time, the king had contemplated the reform of certain abuses which had rendered the

reign of his predecessor painful to himself, and distressing to the nation. The pride of the clergy at that period was so intolerant as to be detrimental to the state, and prejudicial to the royal prerogative; for they pretended an exemption from the civil power. But when Henry communicated his intention to Becket to correct these growing abuses, that haughty prelate vehemently opposed him; and his opposition was greatly strengthened by the interference of Pope Alexander the Third. The latter not only threw his shield of protection over Becket, but condemned the designs of Henry as detrimental to the interests of the Romish Church. This caused the archbishop to be more insolent than ever; and he began to form plans for violating the privileges of the crown, and the existing customs of the land. At length the king, who had been some time in Normandy, became so provoked at the turbulent spirit of Becket, that he was heard to exclaim, "It is my great unhappiness, that among all my servants there is not one who has the courage to revenge the in-

sults which I am constantly receiving from a wretched priest."

There were four knights present when the king gave utterance to these words; and, hurrying to England, they followed Becket into the cathedral, where, in the chapel of the Holy Trinity, they slew him with their swords.

Some time after this occurrence, Henry expressed to the legates of the pope his extreme sorrow for the imprudent words which he had uttered; and was only absolved upon promising to perform all that was required of him in favor of the pope, and to do penance at Becket's tomb. On his return to England, when he came within sight of the Cathedral of Canterbury, he alighted off his horse, and walked barefoot, in the habit of a pilgrim, till he came to Becket's tomb, where, after he had prostrated himself, and prayed for a considerable time, he submitted to be scourged by the monks, and passed all that day and night without refreshment, kneeling upon the bare stones.

The pope had already inscribed the name of Becket in the list of saints and martyrs. Miracles said to be worked over his festering body, were soon acknowledged both by the priests and the laity ; so that multitudes of persons from all parts of Europe, for many succeeding ages, made pilgrimages to the shrine of the reputed martyr, to present their costly offerings, and to worship at his altar. Indeed the offerings of these superstitious devotees poured in so fast, and so profusely, that Erasmus relates that when he visited the tomb of Becket, " a coffin of wood, which covered a coffin of gold, was drawn up by ropes and pulleys, and then an invaluable treasure was discovered ; gold was the meanest thing to be seen there ; all shone and glittered with the most precious jewels, of an extraordinary bigness ; some were larger than the egg of a goose."

Erasmus also mentions a precious relic called St. Thomas à Becket's slipper, adorned with crystals set in copper. This relic was deposited in a hospital for lepers, in the vil-

lage of Harbledown. Here the pilgrims were accustomed to stop, and kiss this bauble, as a preparation for the more solemn approach to his tomb. Indeed, the great influx of persons from all quarters appears to have raised the city of Canterbury to a state of unusual prosperity and splendor. The jubilees, also, which were here celebrated by the permission of the pope, in honor of Becket, were every one sufficient for enriching an entire generation of the inhabitants. These jubilees, each of which lasted fifteen days, continued till the sixteenth century, when they were prohibited by Henry the Eighth.

A few brief observations on the errors and superstitions of Popery, which the subject of this chapter naturally suggests, may form an appropriate and useful conclusion.

1. These superstitions prevailed during what the historians have denominated the *dark ages*. They might well be called dark ; for Popery was rampant, and the "Man of Sin" held uncontrolled dominion over the states of Europe. With respect to Britain, it

is no wonder that internal dissensions and animosities should disturb the social order of society ; and that misery and degradation, anarchy and ruin, should prevail throughout the length and breadth of the land ; for these are the essential characteristics of the Papacy. However the emissaries of Rome may disguise the fact, Popery is truly and properly *anti-christ* ; and every other view of it is fallacious. Wherever it rears its apostate head, it spreads pollution, fetters the conscience, demoralizes the intellect, and accelerates the progress of idolatry and superstition. Where is the holy Sabbath so grossly or so universally desecrated as in Popish countries ? Where is the blessing of religious and civil liberty so utterly prostrated as in those nations which are under the dismal usurpation of the Pope of Rome ? When Becket was bleeding from the wounds which he had received, and which terminated his turbulent career, he exclaimed, " To God, to St. Mary, and the holy patrons of this church, and to St. Denis, I commend my soul, and the Church's cause !" Such was

the dying ejaculation of an archbishop who was canonized as a saint and martyr, at whose shrine pilgrims from every part of Europe offered their oblations, and whose name is venerated by the Church of Rome with enthusiastic adulation !

2. Let us be thankful for the light which the Reformation has imparted, and before which the darkness of Papal error has vanished. It is gratifying to reflect that in many noble edifices in which a false gospel was formerly promulgated, the pure word of God is now preached ; that the doctrine of salvation by faith in the divine atonement has succeeded the celebration of the mass, the offering of prayers to the Virgin Mary, and all the idolatrous ceremonies of Papal Rome !

I love my country, and I love the Protestant religion of my country, because I believe it to be the religion of the Bible. And while I have a tongue to speak, it shall be raised in defence of Protestant Christianity, and against the fearful delusions and soul-destroying dog-

mas of the Popish Church! And while I have a hand to write, my pen shall not cease to be employed in the advocacy of that pure gospel, whose heavenly truths sustained the noble army of martyrs in the flames and on the rack!


3. But while we are thankful for the benefits which the Reformation has procured, in breaking the iron yoke of Popery from the necks of British subjects, and establishing the true Protestant religion, "let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." Let us also beware of the spirit of Popery, which still lurks in secret places, watching for its prey. The agents of Rome are not idle. Perhaps at no period since the bigoted and blood-thirsty Mary have they been so vigilant in their efforts to extend their baneful influence, and to lay the foundation of permanent power. To say nothing of the oath by which they are pledged to employ all their energies to extirpate the Protestant religion, and to establish their own unhallowed system upon its ruins, have they not already increased,

to a fearful amount, the number of their chapels, from the pulpits of which they doom to perdition all who are not of their communion? Has not the number of their schools been multiplied for the purpose of teaching the rising generation a theology which has no foundation in Scripture? Are not the *Jesuits*, in conjunction with the *Sisters of Mercy*, secretly working to bring converts to the "Man of Sin?" If they disclaim all intentions of having recourse to violence in accomplishing their objects, they are not the less dangerous. Violence, indeed, often defeats its own end, by exciting resistance. The slow-working mine is much more to be dreaded. A sudden explosion, which no human caution can guard against, may demolish a fortress that is impregnable to violence.

4. But many Protestants are greatly deluded by the supposition that Popery is changed; that its character has essentially improved; and that the persecuting spirit by which it was characterized in former ages, has given place to a milder tone, and a more

amiable disposition; and that, therefore, there is no real ground of alarm.

O, Protestants! be not deceived. Rome is unchanged. Her character is the same in the nineteenth century as it was in the darkest ages. Her doctrines are the same; her superstitious worship is the same; her spirit is the same. And if the Papists do not persecute those whom they regard as heretics with the same virulence as their forefathers, when they consigned to the flames hundreds of the best men in the land, it is because they are shorn of their strength. Restore it to them, and they will not fail to exert it in trampling under foot our dear-bought privileges. Concede to them their pretended claims, and they will oppress you. Grant to them the power with which they were formerly invested, and they will speedily demolish the fabric of freedom, which was reared at the expense of the blood of your fathers; and every vestige of civil and religious liberty will be banished from the land. Even in the present day, in those countries where the Papists are the



dominant party, they not only burn the Bible, which they regard as a dangerous and heretical book, but often visit with severest vengeance the man who dares to glance over its sacred pages. Who has not heard of the bulls which have been issued against the Bible Society? And who has not heard of the fulminations of Catholic priests against the Scriptural education of the young? Is Popery then changed? No! It is the same now as it ever was,—the enemy of God and man!

The Unbeliever's Death-bed.

"Fools men may live, but fools they cannot die."—YOUNG.

"The way of transgressors is hard."—Prov. xiii, 15.

THE labors of the Sabbath were over, and the congregation had already retired from the sanctuary. Though I experienced a degree of weariness of body, arising from the exercises of the day, I felt no depression of mind, but enjoyed a sweet elevation of soul; and in the cool of the evening, for the day had been sultry, I retraced my steps homeward. Soon after my arrival, a middle-aged female, respectably attired, was shown into the room in which I was seated; she requested me, in an imploring manner, to call at her house the following morning, for the purpose of visiting a sick man, who had for the last twelve months occupied an apartment under her roof. "I am sure," she added, "he cannot continue long. The doctor told

him this morning that he could do no more for him. But he is a stranger to religion, and I fear a disbeliever in Christianity; for I never knew him attend a place of worship. I have several times spoken to him on the necessity of seeking the Lord; and on one occasion I contrived to place a Bible on the chair by the side of his bed, that he might read its blessed truths for himself; but, in a furious passion, he dashed it against the wall; and began to curse and swear in such a blasphemous manner, that I left the room. I hope you will call: perhaps he may listen to you with more patience."

On hearing this sad account, I assured the woman that I would call on the following morning.

"And may your visit be made a blessing to him," she exclaimed, as she withdrew.

On entering his chamber the next morning, I found the wretched sinner tossing about in his bed; his countenance presenting the picture of absolute despair. At first he refused to converse with me; and told me, with an

awful oath, to leave him to his fate, as I could do him no good. "But," said I, "you are a dying man, and on the confines of an eternal world; and I cannot—I will not—leave you to perish in your sins, without sounding the note of alarm, and pointing you to the Saviour who died for the chief of sinners. Hear with what kindness, what condescension he expostulates with you: 'Come now and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet ——.'"

"Hold!" he exclaimed, his countenance assuming a most savage aspect: "your words are idle: I am not a believer in revelation: the Bible is a forgery!"

I looked earnestly into his face as he uttered this impious language. Surely I could not be mistaken. I had seen that face before; but, O, how changed! "Will you permit me to inquire," I said, "whether you were not once a Sunday-school teacher in —— street, London?"

He paused for a moment, as if hesitating whether to answer my question; at length he

replied in an irritable tone, "It matters not what I once was. I do not believe the Scriptures."

"But hear me, Benson,—for that is your name,—did you not believe the Bible when you taught the children to revere its sacred pages, and to live according to its divine precepts? Surely it has lost none of its value since that period."

"Certainly I did then believe it; but I have since discovered a better and more rational system of faith and morals."

"And since you have adopted what you consider to be a more rational system, have you been happier in your soul? Has your conduct been more exemplary? Has your better system, as you call it, armed your spirit against the fear of death? Has it lighted up your dying hour with rejoicing in the prospect of eternity?"

He made no answer; but, covering his face with the bed-clothes, he inwardly groaned; and I secretly prayed that the spirit of conviction might lead him to contrition of heart.

"Benson," I again said, "when you left London you had a widowed mother—a pious, excellent woman. Do you know what has become of her?"

"No," he cried: "I have heard nothing of her for many years; but my conscience has a thousand times reproached me for my rebellious conduct towards her. O that I could see her once again!"

"That privilege will never be permitted you in this world. She died in — hospital a short time since, where poverty and physical suffering compelled her to seek an asylum. I saw her in her last moments. I was with her when she was summoned from a world of tribulation to a land of light and glory. Her last prayers to Heaven were devoutly offered for your conversion."

Amazement sat on his countenance, during this affecting disclosure. The tears started into his eyes, and began to trickle down his sunken cheeks. He rolled himself on the bed from side to side, in the greatest agony and mental dejection.

"She had more reason to *curse* me with her dying breath," he exclaimed. "But I am cursed already. The curse of an offended God is upon me! Hell opens its mouth to receive me! Devils are waiting to torture me! O, horror! horror!" And he sank exhausted on the pillow.

After the lapse of a few minutes, he faintly articulated, "O that I had never doubted! then might I have secured a hope of heaven. But it is too late. Fool that I was, to listen to those abandoned wretches—demons in human form! But they will be my companions in the burning lake!"

"Then you were lured to the path of infidelity by evil company?" I observed.

"O yes; by mingling with the society of a number of depraved beings, who call themselves *Socialists*, I was soon induced to become one of their hated fraternity. Yes, I became a *Socialist*; and consequently a despiser of religion. I was taught to reject the Bible, which had been the guide of my early years; and to blaspheme the name of Him, whose

praises had been so often on my infant tongue. Having no monitor but my own deceitful heart, I wandered far in the ways of sin ; and having no control over my unbridled passions, I have been led into all the excesses of sensuality and dissipation ; till my licentious, dissolute habits have ruined my constitution, and brought me to the brink of the grave, while yet in the meridian of life. A thousand times have I tried to persuade myself that there is no hereafter ; and dwelt in imagination on the negative blessing of annihilation. But all would not do. I know there is a God, before whose tribunal I must shortly stand. I know my doom !—I am lost, lost forever ! O that I had listened to the counsels of my sainted mother, and profited by those holy truths which might have led me to the Friend of sinners ! But now they are forever hid from my eyes !”

“ Do not despair,” I said : “ the Saviour, whom you have despised, is full of compassion. His mercy endureth forever. He waits to be gracious. Nay, he entreats you to be

reconciled. Hear his own promise, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Avail yourself *at once* of his gracious invitation. Plead his promise. In the eleventh hour cast yourself upon his mercy, rely upon his atonement, and heaven will yet be yours."

"Talk not to me of heaven. I shall never taste its hallowed enjoyments. I tell you my doom is fixed. In a few hours, perhaps a few minutes, my soul will be in hell!"

I now proposed praying with him; but he said, "It is no use. You might as well pray to the winds. Your prayers will produce no impression on me; and God will not regard them on behalf of one who has nothing to offer but an emaciated body, corrupted in the service of the devil, and a soul laden with an accumulated weight of guilt. No, I am beyond the reach of mercy."

I did pray, however, before I took my departure, and promised to call again in the evening.

The house in which he lodged was almost

half a mile from my own residence; and while the summer sun was lingering in the western horizon, enfringing with its departing beams the passing clouds, I bent my steps once more to the apartment of the dying sinner. I found him in the same gloomy, melancholy state of mind. The horrors of despair were, if possible, still more strikingly exhibited in his countenance. For a considerable space of time I expostulated with him on the impiety of distrusting a Saviour, who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth. I entreated him with tears in my eyes, not to delay an application to the blood of sprinkling. But all was unavailing.

I found the room to be exceedingly close; for the day had been unusually hot. I opened the casement, and as I gazed upon the sky, which was now covered with black clouds, I fancied a storm was fast approaching. Returning to the bed-side, I resumed my entreaties and exhortations to the wretched object who lay before me, but with no better

success. I then kneeled down at the foot of the bed ; and while wrestling with God on his behalf, a most deafening peal of thunder shook the building to its foundation.

“ Hark !” said he, starting up in the bed, his eyes rolling with the wildest and most fearful glances round the room : “ Hark ! did you hear that volley ? The infernal spirits are mustering all the artillery of hell to give me a salute to the regions of damnation !”

The noise which this horrid exclamation occasioned, brought into the room the inmates of the house. As they entered, pale with affright, he fixed his eyes on them with a ghastly stare. Then, falling back on the pillow, he uttered an awful groan, and expired.

THE END.



